

***Lines in the Sand:***  
***An Anthropological Discourse***  
***on Wildlife Tourism***

*By*

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# **Abstract**

The management of wildlife tourism has been dominated by ideologies informed by western colonialism and its values of nature. These ideologies, made transparent through communicative and interpretative discourses, influence the way management policies and practices are devised and enacted. The inherent scientific and utilitarian views are supported by a doctrine of separation. This is apparent in the dualism posed, and enacted, between nature and culture that sees humans as being the sole carriers of culture that separates them from the uncultured and uncivilised world of nature into which all other animals, and certainly untamed wildlife, belong. It justifies the use of non-humans for human purposes and continues to allow us to treat non-human animals and other forms of nature in often abominable ways.

This thesis investigates two situations in which wildlife tourism occurs in Australia. Fraser Island and Penguin Island are two wildlife tourism destinations on opposite sides of the continent with very different wildlife but some very similar issues. From these two contexts data was collected through interviews, focus groups, participant observation, and from literary and documentary sources. Understanding the empirical data collected from these case studies is facilitated through a social constructionist view of discourse analysis that allows an unpacking of the messages and a stance from which to challenge the dominant ideologies that frame management and interaction.

In the thesis I demonstrate that anthropology, in its incarnation as environmental anthropology and as a team player in a necessarily interdisciplinary approach to understanding and resolving environmental issues, has much to offer. This engagement has the potential to enhance not only the sustainable future of nature-based activities like wildlife tourism but also the relevance of anthropology in the postcolonial contemporary world.

The need for a holistic framework encompassing all the stakeholders in any wildlife tourism venture is proposed. This approach to wildlife tourism is best serviced by examining perspectives, values and concerns of all members of the wildlife tourism community at any given destination. It is only through this type of holistic and situated focus that we can hope to effectively understand, and then manage, in the best interests of all parties.

More specifically, and finally, I argue for a rethinking of the way wildlife tourism interactions are managed in some settings. The ideology of separation, enacted both conceptually and physically to create maintain boundaries, is demonstrated through the two case studies and the ways in which interactions between humans and wildlife are currently managed. An alternative is posed, that by reconstructing management in settings where wildlife tourists may be more accepting of their own responsibility towards nature, a model can be developed that allows people and wildlife to co-exist without ‘killing’ the natural instincts of either.

# **Statement of Originality**

This thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma at any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where reference is made in the thesis itself.

Georgette Leah Burns

26 May 2008





## **Publications Arising from this Thesis**

The following seven publications have arisen directly from the research undertaken during my candidature for this degree. Modified versions of these are used, and acknowledged, throughout the thesis.

Burns, G. L. (accepted, in press) Managing Wildlife for People or People for Wildlife? A case study of dingoes and tourism on Fraser Island, Queensland, Australia. J. Hill and T. Gale (eds), *Ecotourism and Environmental Sustainability: An examination of concepts, theories and practice*. Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited.

Hytten, K. and Burns, G. L. 2007 Deconstructing Dingo Management on Fraser Island, Queensland: The significance of social constructionism for effective wildlife management. *Australasian Journal of Environmental Management*, 14:40-49.

Burns, G. L. 2006 The Fascination of Fur and Feathers: Managing human-animal interactions in wildlife tourism settings. *Australian Zoologist*, 33(4):446-457.

Burns, G. L. 2004a Anthropology and Tourism: Past contributions and future theoretical challenges. *Anthropological Forum*, 14(1):5-22.

Burns, G. L. 2004b The Host Community in Wildlife Tourism. In K. Higginbottom (ed), *Wildlife Tourism: Impacts, management and Planning*. Gold Coast: Common Ground Publishing. Pp 125-144.

Burns, G. L. and Howard, P. 2003 When Wildlife Tourism Goes Wrong: A case study of stakeholder and management issues regarding Dingoes on Fraser Island, Australia. *Tourism Management*, 24(6): 699-712.

Burns, G. L and Sofield, T. H. B. 2001 *The Host Community: Social and cultural issues concerning wildlife tourism*. Status Assessment of Wildlife Tourism in Australia. Gold Coast: CRC for Sustainable Tourism.



# Acknowledgments

I have called the final section of this thesis ‘concluding the journey’ but of course there is much to the journey that is not told throughout its pages. It has taken me on a journey that has spanned many years and many life changes. Being a student has been one role amongst many of mother, wife, daughter, sister (and other familial roles), as well as lecturer, colleague, friend (and other social roles). Because of this length, and breadth, the path travelled has touched the lives of many others whom I want to thank for their help, patience and sharing of knowledge.

My supervisors, Jim Macbeth and Susan Moore, have always unwaveringly believed in my abilities, despite my own periods of doubt, and offered support and guidance in ways beyond the academic (including the excellent beers at Little Creatures). I tell my own students how important it is to have great supervisors, and was fortunate to find such talented people for myself. As a part-time, external (and spatially distant) student I’m sure I offered additional challenges, and greatly appreciate the flexibility extended to meet at airports, homes, and outside normal work hours. My deepest thanks to you both.

At each field site I have interacted with many people, and some wildlife. It never ceases to amaze me how willing people are to talk, often to a complete stranger, about things that matter to them. I am grateful to the many on Fraser Island, Penguin Island, and beyond, who opened their doors (be they houses, tents, resort rooms, offices or buses) to me and let me briefly into their lives to share a cuppa and a biscuit and do what anthropologists do best – be nosey.

The research would not have been possible without permission from those who oversee the sites at which I worked, and the Universities at which I am based. Consequently, I wish to thank the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service in Queensland and the Department of Conservation and Environment in Western Australia, as well as staff at the Kingfisher Bay Resort and Village on Fraser Island and the Mersey Point Kiosk in Safety Bay. All generously supported the research, providing permits, tickets, accommodation and many hours of their time; and I have enjoyed working with you all. Financial and technical support was also provided by Murdoch and Griffith Universities. In particular, thanks to Aubs for the great maps, Terry for the long chats, and the two Cols for the willingness to share your immense knowledge of the island you love so well.

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It has been an immensely enjoyable journey, and I am extremely fortunate to have shared it with such wonderful people. Thank you all.

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# SECTION ONE:

## SETTING THE SCENE

The purpose of this first, of four, sections in the thesis is to introduce the reader to the purpose and nature of the research. The section contains three chapters in which necessary background material to the topic is presented. The aim and significance of the research is explained in the first chapter (the introduction), where key terms are also defined and the forthcoming structure outlined. Empirical data for the research is drawn from two case studies, and these locations are introduced in the second chapter. Wildlife tourism on Fraser Island, in Queensland, constitutes the primary and major case study while Penguin Island, in Western Australia, is the secondary and more minor case study. Finally in this section, the third chapter explains the rationale of the design behind collection methods and how data was collected during the research, before turning to an explanation of the data analysis and theorization utilised in the thesis.



## SECTION ONE: SETTING THE SCENE

### CHAPTER ONE

#### **Introduction**

##### **1.0 Introduction**

The management of wildlife resources, including encounters that occur between tourists and wildlife, has emerged as a major issue for the tourism industry and management agencies (Coghlan and Prideaux 2008:68).

People and animals have always interacted. In different cultures, in different ways and with different strategies, attempts to control these interactions have always assumed importance. In recent times, with increasing domestic and international tourism, wildlife tourism has emerged as a tourism product that offers another way for people and animals to interact. Wildlife tourism can both protect wildlife and be the cause of its destruction. It can provide positive experiences for tourists and life-threateningly negative ones. It can support community lifestyles and tear them apart. It can enhance conservation and work in opposition to it. It can financially benefit management organisations and can be their biggest nightmare. For all these reasons, wildlife tourism demands controls.

Wildlife management seeks to mediate the relationship between humans and wildlife, and a wide range of management strategies are used to control interactions between humans and wildlife (Festa-Bianchet and Apollino 2003:3). The



importance of the social, or human, dimensions of wildlife management is increasingly recognised (Burns 2004b,<sup>1</sup> Goedeke and Herda-Rapp 2005:9, Knight 2000a:6).

This thesis focuses on human-wildlife interactions in wildlife tourism settings. It examines the wildlife tourism community, concentrating in particular on the tourists, the wildlife, and the managers of their interactions. Theoretical discourses from anthropology, tourism and the environmental sciences are brought together to question the values and ideologies that underlie wildlife tourism and its management. Discourse analysis and social constructionism enable the de-coupling of people and wildlife, exposing and challenging an underlying principle guiding management. Coexistence, as a way forward for sustainable wildlife tourism, is then proposed.

Central to this thesis are two case study locations: Fraser Island in Queensland where wildlife tourism takes place around dingoes, and Penguin Island in Western Australia where wildlife tourism takes place around penguins. These sites offer examples of different types of wildlife tourism interactions, and illustrate tensions in the management of wildlife and tourists.

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<sup>1</sup> I frequently reference my own work throughout this thesis. When referenced in a context such as here, the publication, rather than my assertions, is the evidence of a change (*e.g.*, increasing recognition). The fact an editor and editorial committee has seen fit to publish is itself support for the assertion.

## **1.1 Background to the Problem and Definitions of Key Terms<sup>2</sup>**

Ten years ago wildlife tourism was considered one of the fastest growing sectors of tourism worldwide yet it had been the subject of little research (Ashley and Roe 1998). Although this situation has started to change (see, for example, edited texts by Higginbottom 2004a, and Newsome, Dowling and Moore 2005) more work is required. One example of the recognition of the increasing importance of this area in Australia was a pioneering research program conducted from 1998 to 2004 as a project of the Co-operative Research Centre (CRC) for Sustainable Tourism. Researchers in the program produced status assessment reports on various aspects of wildlife tourism in Australia,<sup>3</sup> and a Sustainable Wildlife Tourism Convention was held in Hobart in October 2001 to showcase this work. Recommendations from the Convention included the formation of a national organisation to represent zoos, sanctuaries, wildlife parks and other wildlife operators around Australia (Wildlife Tourism Australia 2005). As a consequence, Wildlife Tourism Australia was established in 2002 with a mission to "promote the sustainable development of a diverse wildlife tourism industry that supports conservation" (Wildlife Tourism Australia 2007).

“Any living non-human, undomesticated organism in the kingdom Animalia” (Moulton and Sanderson 1999:111) is generally considered to be wildlife,

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<sup>2</sup> Important key terminology requires definition at the outset of this thesis. While only a brief overview is provided here, many of the complex concepts encapsulated in these definitions are examined further in later chapters.

<sup>3</sup> These status assessment reports, and other publications by the wildlife tourism subset of the Sustainable Tourism CRC can be found at <http://www.crctourism.com.au/bookshop/default.aspx>

though some definitions also include non-animal species.<sup>4</sup> The Wildlife Conservation Act 1950 (WA) includes both plants and animals in its definition of wildlife. As animals are the wildlife focus of this thesis, wildlife tourism is defined here as tourism based on interactions with such animals, whether in their natural environment or in captivity (such as in a zoo).<sup>5</sup> Wildlife tourism can include non-consumptive activities such as viewing, handling and photographing wildlife as well as consumptive activities such as fishing and hunting (Higginbottom 2004b). This thesis will focus on non-consumptive activities dominant in the two case study locations.<sup>6</sup> While this definition of wildlife tourism may appear narrow, the overlap of wildlife tourism activities with other forms of tourism makes accurate categorisation highly problematic (Curtin 2005:4). As a sub-set of nature-based tourism, wildlife tourism has some clear overlaps with ecotourism (illustrated in Figures 4.3 and 4.4); these relationships are discussed further in Chapter Four. Wildlife tourism is essentially “about increasing the probability of positive encounters with wildlife for visitors whilst protecting the wildlife resource” (Reynolds and Braithwaite 2001:31). As such, it contains all the traditional elements of the tourism system, its distinguishing feature being its focus on wildlife as the tourist attracting resource.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The Evaluating Eden project, for example, coordinated by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), began in 1994 and initially defined wildlife in a narrow and utilitarian manner as “land-based, non-domesticated animals (marine fauna are excluded) which are, or could be, used or valued in any way by people ...” (Roe *et al.* 2000:10). However, this anthropocentric definition was found inadequate for the context of community based wildlife management and later revised to include “animal and plant resources and their habitats” (p13).

<sup>5</sup> For an illustration of the various typologies of wildlife tourism see Horner and Swarbroke (2004:198).

<sup>6</sup> For recent research on consumptive use of wildlife for tourism see Lovelock (2008).

<sup>7</sup> For further definitions of wildlife tourism see, for example, Higginbottom (2004b), Newsome, Dowling and Moore (2005:16-20), and Shackley (1996).

In this thesis, some of the key issues relevant to contemporary wildlife tourism in Australia will be explored through two case studies. Fraser Island in Queensland is home to what may be the purest strain of dingoes in Australia (EPA 2006) and their interactions with people have generated much publicity since April 2001 when a child was killed on the island by two dingoes. This forms the primary case in the thesis. Penguin Island in Western Australia is home to the largest colony of Little, or Fairy, penguins in Western Australia and their interactions with people are closely monitored and controlled. This forms the secondary and more minor case study in the thesis. The two case studies have some strong similarities but also some marked and obvious differences in the wildlife tourism issues they pose (as discussed in Chapter Two).

The data for this thesis are derived from research conducted between 2000 and 2008 (discussed in Chapter Three). The focus of this research is on wildlife tourism settings, and what happens within them for both people and wildlife. The thesis concentrates on wildlife tourism in areas where wildlife occurs naturally and is managed by humans regardless of tourism. Thus, the research informing this discussion focuses on free-ranging wildlife, and free-ranging tourists, in settings such as national parks and protected areas.

There are obviously many such settings, and the human-wildlife interactions within them can be very different. As captive wildlife tourism settings, zoos are traditionally spaces for people, though also increasingly emphasising the needs of wildlife as part of a western conservation ethic, associated with an increasing sense of obligation towards environmental protection and preservation (Tribe 2001, Tribe

and Booth 2003, Mallinson 2003).<sup>8</sup> Parks and other protected areas are different. They were historically about creating boundaries around and isolating a particular area, often one recognised for special environmental features valued by some stakeholder groups (usually those in positions of political dominance). In some locations, certain stakeholder groups (such as indigenous people) were seen as an impediment to preserving environmental features and removed from the special area.<sup>9</sup> Tourist facilities in these areas and the need to cater for, manage, and control, people was often an afterthought. This history has implications for the way park management occurs today (Worboys *et al.* 2005).

Fraser Island receives both ‘tourists’ and ‘visitors.’ The terms are used interchangeably throughout this thesis to refer to people at the wildlife tourism destination who are not residents, managers, researchers or tourist industry workers: they are people who are there for the purpose of leisure. Tourists and visitors are commonly defined, and distinguished, according to their length of stay at a destination.<sup>10</sup> For example, a tourist may be described as a person who travels to a place outside their usual environment for a period of at least one night but not more than a year, and for whom the main purpose of the visit is something other than work. The term visitor is used more broadly to include shorter stays, and may be synonymous with the notion of a day-tripper. Penguin Island receives only visitors

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<sup>8</sup> For recent information on wildlife tourism in zoos and other captive settings see Cain and Meritt (2008), Frost and Roehl (2008), and Mason (2008).

<sup>9</sup> Many examples of this practice can be cited. The Royal Chitwan National Park, for example, became Nepal’s first national park in 1973 and a designated World Heritage Site in 1984. Located in the Chitwan Valley, 130km southwest of the capital of Kathmandu, it is heralded as one of the best National Parks in the world (supporting populations of the single horned Asiatic rhinoceros and the Bengal tiger). However, it was established at an immense social cost as 22000 people were removed and resettled from within the park boundaries (IUCN 1984).

<sup>10</sup> For further discussion on the standard definitions of tourist, traveller, visitor, and so on, refer to Moscardo, Woods, and Greenwood (2000).

as it is not possible for people without a professional reason to stay overnight on the island. I recognise I am breaking some traditions to treat tourists and visitors as synonymous, as they may be operationally different for some management purposes; however, in the context of this research they can be reasonably discussed together.<sup>11</sup>

In tourism literature, any managed tourism activity or experience is referred to as an attraction (Swarbroke 2001); however, the term could also apply to unmanaged activities. As the focus of this thesis is on wildlife tourism, the situations described and analysed include destinations where wildlife is a major (though not the only) attraction. The term interaction is used to describe any situation where people and wildlife come into contact.<sup>12</sup> This contact may be physical, and involve people feeding, handling or eating wildlife, or non-physical such as viewing<sup>13</sup> and photographing.

The existence of wildlife tourism depends on a viable resource (wildlife), an interested market (tourists) and accommodating locals (hosts). Its success depends on effective management and satisfaction of a wide range of stakeholders, who are described in this thesis as the wildlife tourism community. The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) in its New Global Code of Ethics for World Tourism (1999) identifies stakeholders as tourism professionals, public authorities, the press and the media (cited in Ryan 2002:19). However, this definition obviously

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<sup>11</sup> This study is considered a personal effort; thus, I use the first person 'I' throughout to express and reflect my personal work. The use of 'I' in research is widely accepted, particularly in anthropological and ethnographic work. Gummesson (2000:xi), for example, recommends that the researcher use first person terminology and not take cover behind using 'we' or 'the researcher' in his/her work.

<sup>12</sup> For further information on 'attractions' in the context of wildlife tourism see Ballantyne *et al.* (2008), Moscardo (2007), Reynolds and Braithwaite (2001).

<sup>13</sup> For information on minimising the impacts of wildlife viewing see Hughes and Carlsen (2008).

excludes many other interest groups and individuals, including the host,<sup>14</sup> or local/resident community, visitors, tourists, and indigenous groups. As Newsome, Dowling and Moore (2005:23-4) note, there is a range of stakeholders in wildlife tourism, including hosts, tourists, operators, managers, organisations, businesses and government bodies. For the purpose of this research, stakeholders have been broadly defined, following Ryan (2002:20) as “simply any individual or identifiable group who is affected by, or who can affect the achievement of corporate objectives.”<sup>15</sup> The terms ‘stakeholder’ and ‘community’ are often used interchangeably and throughout this thesis I have chosen to refer to the ‘wildlife tourism community’ to encompass all individual or group stakeholders (as discussed in Chapter Five).<sup>16</sup>

Managers are the people with the authority to (attempt to) control the interactions between people and wildlife. In Australian wildlife tourism settings, this authority usually derives from state or federal governments, as in the case of government jurisdiction over national parks. However, wildlife tourism also occurs as part of private tourism ventures, such the Australia Zoo in Queensland. Conservation and management are often linked in wildlife tourism discourse; however, and “while wildlife management is clearly used to achieve the objectives of conservation, conservation is not necessarily the outcome of all wildlife management strategies ... indeed in some cases it in direct conflict with other forms of wildlife management” (Roe *et al.* 2000:13).

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<sup>14</sup> For further discussion on consideration of the host community in tourism literature see Macbeth *et al.* (2002), and for analysis on enhancing community involvement with wildlife tourism see Ashley and Roe (1998), and Burns (2004b).

<sup>15</sup> For a comprehensive guide to identifying stakeholders and investigating relationships between them see Reed *et al.* (2009).

<sup>16</sup> There has been much academic musing on the meaning of community, with many conclusions reached stressing it as a term that is dynamic and not easily lent to generalisations (Roe *et al.* 2000:11-12).

Wildlife tourism, as with many other forms of tourism operating in the world today, is encouraged to fit notions of perceived sustainability. However, sustainability is a slippery concept.<sup>17</sup> It is widely accepted that a universally applicable definition of sustainable development is not plausible (Hunter 2002:8, Macbeth 2005) despite the universality of the term's use. Sustainable tourism, following the principles of sustainable development, is broadly used to denote tourism which remains viable over an indefinite period without degrading or altering its environment (both social and physical) to such an extent that it prohibits the successful development and wellbeing of other activities and processes. For tourism to be sustainable in this limited definition it must provide a satisfying experience to visitors, remain economically viable, and not have significant negative effects on local communities or the natural environment.

The World Tourism Organisation (WTO) more ambitiously focuses on the need for positive improvements rather than simply minimising negative effects. It defines sustainable tourism as “a model form of economic development that is designed to improve the quality of life in the host community, provide a high quality of experience for the visitors, and maintain the quality of the environment on which both the host community and the visitor depend” (cited in Ryan 2002:22). Northcote and Macbeth (2006) similarly argue that true sustainable tourism will contribute to environmental, cultural and social well-being. Ideally, sustainable tourism should enhance all aspects of tourism (social, economic, cultural and environmental). Sustainable tourism is discussed further in Chapter Four.

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<sup>17</sup> There has been much academic debate on the definition of ‘sustainability’. This will be discussed further throughout the thesis.



## **1.2 Aims of this Thesis**

This thesis explores one of the central dilemmas facing wildlife tourism: what are the implications of the separation constructed between wildlife and people in wildlife tourism settings? A purpose then is to determine who benefits and who loses from this separation. This exploration is an interdisciplinary journey drawing on understandings, methods and theories from anthropology, tourism and environmental science. In doing so, it promotes an engagement between anthropology and the scholarly discourses of tourism and environmental science, and a broad approach to defining and understanding the wildlife tourism community.

This study constitutes an inquiry into factors affecting sustainable wildlife tourism in Australia, focussing on the separation of people and nature in management discourse and practice. In 2003, Adams and Mulligan argued that discussions focussed on sustainability must be broadened “to embrace understandings of the colonial legacy, explorations of the contradictory experiences of decolonisation, and a critical review of conservation language and discourses” (2003b:293-294). The discussion in this thesis adopts this approach, using social constructionism to explore and challenge the dominant discourse of sustainable wildlife management that stems from a colonial legacy.

Approaches to wildlife tourism management are needed which will optimise stakeholder satisfaction with wildlife tourism, within the constraints of ensuring sustainability of the wildlife product. This thesis is designed around a series of objectives aimed at understanding these constraints and finding new approaches. Guiding the research that informs this thesis are questions that ask why management

of the human-wildlife interface occurs in the way it does, and what values underpin the constructions of wildlife that, in turn, enable and legitimise the management. The Fraser Island and Penguin Island case studies provide rich and contemporary settings within which to search for answers.

### **1.3 Significance and Outcomes of the Research**

Wildlife tourism can go wrong (Burns and Howard 2003, Moscardo *et al.* 2006). Interactions between people and wildlife in wildlife tourism settings can threaten human lives and species conservation. The case studies and theories explored in this thesis highlight the way wildlife tourism is managed. The dominant constructions underlying management policies and practices are then exposed, and challenged, and alternatives posed.

This thesis contributes to the body of literature on the anthropology of tourism, environmental anthropology and wildlife tourism; but its significance reaches further. It has long been noted that anthropology's engagement with tourism is in need of revision and renewed vigour, both in theory and in practice (*e.g.*, Burns 2004a, Stronza 2001). Cohen (1979a), among others, advocated this in the late 1970s, but the argument gained strength at the turn of the century when it began to offer some alternatives to the ideas that had been formulaic for some 30 years. This thesis demonstrates one of the many ways forward. It shows not simply that the anthropology of tourism has much to offer, but that anthropology itself, by rejoicing in its intrinsic interdisciplinarity potential, can remain a strong and relevant field in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This is important, not just for the subfield of the anthropology of tourism but for anthropology as a whole, which has recently been seen as an

outdated and “threatened discipline” (Kapferer 2007). This is discussed further in Chapter Four.

The same argument is put forward for environmental anthropology. A field that concentrated on human and cultural ecology in the 1960s and 1970s (see the many works of Harris [1966] and Rappaport [1968, 1979], for example), environmental anthropology too has been in danger of losing its contemporary relevance. Recognition that anthropology has much to offer the study of environmental issues has been slow to emerge even though many key anthropologists have been working in this area (see, for example, the work of Rigsby and Chase (1998) and Trigger (1997, 2006, in press) in the Australian context). Such recognition involves a challenge to the view that environmental issues are the domain of the natural sciences alone and to the unwillingness of anthropologists and others to be drawn into exploring the interdisciplinary nature of the environmental debate.

Applying anthropological methods and techniques to environmental problems was perhaps first embraced under the heading of environmentalism (*e.g.*, Herzfeld 2001, Little 1999, and Milton 1993). The American Anthropological Association ran its first conference session on environmental anthropology in 1996, and the Australian Anthropological Society followed suit in 2003. Following that conference, *The Australian Journal of Anthropology* (TAJA) produced a special edition (16:3) on ‘Australian Anthropologies of the Environment’ in 2005. In the same year the journal *Conservation and Society*, published by the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and Environment, devoted a special issue to anthropological investigations of environmental issues (3:2).

The thesis is positioned within the emerging field of what I call ‘the Anthropology of Environmental Tourism’. The ordering of these three areas in the label is not intended to represent any hierarchy of importance or concern. The blending of elements from all three areas is important, as will be discussed throughout the thesis.

Given my academic training and experience in anthropology, this thesis began as an anthropological approach to the consideration of wildlife tourism host communities, but has become much more. The application of an anthropological lens to the study of tourism and environment, particularly to the subfield of wildlife tourism, has some sound benefits for enhancing understanding and assessing management practices and implications. For wildlife tourism scholars, researchers, planners and managers the significance of this thesis lies in its contribution to a greater understanding of the wildlife tourism community, as well as its exposure of the dominant ideologies governing management and the challenges they pose for alternative ways forward. An important outcome from this research is the insights it provides into how wildlife-based tourism in Australia can continue in a sustainable framework that is suitable for the wildlife, the tourists, other stakeholders, and the managers of this complex phenomenon.

## **1.4 Thesis Structure**

This thesis comprises eleven chapters divided into four sections. The first section focuses on background material and contains chapters One (the introduction), Two (the case studies) and Three (methodology). Section Two focuses on the key literature and theoretical concepts relevant to this thesis, which are discussed in chapters Four, Five and Six. The Fraser Island case study is analysed (chapters

Seven, Eight and Ten) and compared with Penguin Island (chapters Nine and Ten) in Section Three. The final chapter, Eleven, summarises and concludes the thesis in Section Four.

#### **1.4.1 Section One: Setting the Scene**

Chapter One provides an overview of the thesis, explaining the aim of the research and discussing its significance. Because an understanding of key terminology is important, some of the key terms used throughout the thesis are introduced in this first chapter which concludes with an outline of, and rationale for, the structure of the thesis.

The two case studies, from which empirical evidence was collected for this thesis, are introduced in Chapter Two. Fraser Island, off the Queensland coast, and Penguin Island, off the Western Australian coast, are both destinations for wildlife tourism. This chapter discusses the location of these two case studies, the wildlife they contain, and their wildlife tourism community (managers, tourists, and other stakeholders). This description of the fieldwork sites provides the necessary background for their discussion and analysis in Section Three.

The research used a number of strategies and methods, and the third chapter explains the rationale of the design behind collection methods and how data were collected during the research. Topics covered include the combined research strategies of ethnography and case studies, as well as a description of each of the data collection methods used (sampling, interviews, literature and documentary sources, and participant observation). The ethical considerations pertinent to the collection of data and how they were dealt with are also discussed here. Finally, the chapter turns

to an explanation of the data analysis and theorisation. Discourse analysis is presented as a guiding analytical and theoretical tool for collecting, collating and understanding the data. An overview of social constructionism explains how this perspective is used as a context for the study and understanding of nature and the environment in this thesis.

#### **1.4.2 Section Two: Understanding the Literature and Theoretical Concepts**

Chapter Four, dealing with the anthropology of tourism and environmental anthropology, further expands the theoretical orientation behind this research. In this chapter I discuss where, and why, data from the case studies fits into these bodies of literature and why this literature provides both a sound, and unique, framework for the thesis. This includes exploration of the historical relationship between anthropology and tourism, from the perspective of anthropology. From a time of deliberate avoidance in the 1960s, to the acceptance of ‘the anthropology of tourism’ as a valid field of inquiry by a handful of researchers in the 1970s, I argue an imperative for engagement exists today. The relatively new, and growing, field of environmental anthropology is also a focus of Chapter Four. Here the history of environmental anthropology is discussed, along with its recent rise and importance in Australia. Some of the opportunities and challenges for increasing both the academic and applied engagement of anthropology with the field of environmental science are outlined. This valuable field of enquiry is perfectly placed to embrace a perspective on wildlife tourism, as will be demonstrated throughout the thesis.

The third main theoretical area pertinent to this thesis is that of the wildlife tourism community. Chapter Five discusses literature on the contested notion of community as it is relevant to wildlife tourism settings. The wildlife tourism community

referred to throughout the thesis is made up of many stakeholder groups and individuals with interests in wildlife tourism that are often diverse and conflicting, and the importance of inclusion of these stakeholders in decisions about wildlife tourism is made implicit. In exploring the relationship between communities and wildlife tourism on a global scale, some of the issues addressed include involvement of stakeholders, community attitudes and values, and their impact on people, wildlife and the sustainability of tourism. The importance of considering all these issues when planning for, and managing, wildlife tourism, is discussed.

Chapter Six concludes the discussion of theoretical principles by examining the links between wildlife tourism, conservation and sustainability, arguing that conservation practices are informed by the dominant, Eurocentric, ideology of nature that is a legacy of colonisation. The relationship between nature and culture explored in this chapter provides a framework that is later applied to the separation of wildlife and people in wildlife tourism settings by management authorities. The use, or denial, of anthropomorphism is discussed as an example of a discourse that influences the construction of wildlife tourism and interactions between people and wildlife.

### **1.4.3 Section Three: Considering Case Studies and Analysing Data**

Chapter Seven focuses on the Fraser Island case study as an example of wildlife management in a wildlife tourism context. This case is unique in that the management action first came about in a time of crisis and is now ongoing. It illustrates the dilemma deciding between prioritising of management of wildlife for people or management of people for wildlife. Images on brochures, web pages and postcards lead to an expectation by tourists and visitors that interaction with dingoes will be part of their Fraser Island experience. Yet, as the number of tourists to the

island increase, so do the reports of dingo attacks. The first, and only, human death from such an attack on Fraser Island occurred in April 2001, and was immediately followed by a government-ordered cull of dingoes. This chapter explores issues surrounding both this decision and the management strategies implemented afterwards. Based on interviews with a variety of stakeholders in the wildlife tourism community, many conflicting perspectives on human-wildlife interaction as a component of tourism are identified. The conclusion is drawn that while strategies for managing dingoes are essential, if such attacks are a consequence of humans feeding wildlife and resultant wildlife habituation, then strategies for successfully managing people are also necessary for this type of wildlife tourism to be sustainable.

Maintaining the focus on Fraser Island, Chapter Eight uses a framework of social constructionism to analyse part of the governing body's wildlife management: the Fraser Island Dingo Management Strategy (FIDMS). Wildlife management is based on a range of assumptions about wildlife and expectations about nature. As such, it can be seen as the result of the process of social construction. To ensure the validity and effectiveness of wildlife management, it is necessary to consider the assumptions underlying wildlife management and perpetuated through management discourses. Following the description of management issues on Fraser Island in the previous chapter, this chapter deconstructs dingo management on the island. It argues that the process of construction in defining environmental problems and possible solutions needs to be recognised and the nature of the ideologies underpinning environmental management acknowledged. Management practices need to be consistent with discourses, reflecting priorities, addressing the problem



and facilitating the fulfilment of expectations. Ultimately, entrenched ideologies and assumptions need to be challenged to create new possibilities for action.

Chapter Nine brings Penguin Island, as the minor case study, back into consideration. It offers a comparison of the similarities and differences in wildlife tourism on Fraser Island and Penguin Island, exploring a range of issues around managing human-wildlife interactions. This chapter examines the roles of key stakeholders in the wildlife tourism community, focusing on the values placed on wildlife, as well as the nature of human-wildlife interactions and management policies and practices in the two wildlife tourism settings. In particular, the relationships between people and dingoes, and between people and penguins, are explored. These relationships have shifted over time, and are subject to different controls in each location. Data drawn from interviews, observations and management policies show that as perceptions of wildlife change, management of interactions must also change.

Continuing the comparison, but with a greater focus on analysis rather than description, Chapter Ten returns to the key themes raised in Chapter Six, comparing and analysing them on Fraser Island and Penguin Island. The physical and conceptual separation of people and wildlife in the two wildlife tourism settings is explored and its implications interrogated and challenged. The ways in which boundaries between people and wildlife are constructed are analysed in terms of the ideologies and values that underpin them. The role of anthropomorphism in creating and maintaining these boundaries is investigated and the argument made that anthropomorphising penguins may assist their conservation while the ‘anthropodenial’ of dingoes hinders it. The chapter calls for a reconstruction of

people and wildlife, and a reconstruction of the management of their interactions. Embracing the ideals of ecotourism, and empowering of wildlife tourists to take responsibility for their own actions is suggested as a way forward.

#### **1.4.4 Section Four: Concluding the Journey**

Chapter Eleven concludes the thesis. It comments on the value and utility of the notion of community for understanding, and ultimately managing sustainably, wildlife tourism. The chapter advocates the need to challenge constructions underpinning wildlife management and the accepted interactions between wildlife and people, arguing for recognition of humans as part of the natural system and a relaxing of management strategies that focus on the separation of people and nature. It also encourages further research in the interdisciplinary overlap between anthropology, environmental science, and tourism: the anthropology of environmental tourism. The combination of perspectives within this area offers crucial insights that can lead to positive outcomes for the environmental and social challenges faced by wildlife, and for the sustainability of wildlife tourism in Australia.



## SECTION ONE: SETTING THE SCENE

### CHAPTER TWO

#### **Australian Wildlife Tourism**

#### **Case Studies<sup>1</sup>**

##### **2.0 A Tale of Two Islands**

Fraser Island and Penguin Island both lie off the Australian coast and are home to wildlife that attracts tourists. They both have a long history of human visitations, with human-wildlife interactions gaining increasing importance. In each location, people and animals interact in various ways. The key wildlife species discussed in this thesis are dingoes (*Canis lupus dingo*) on Fraser Island, and penguins (*Eudyptula minor*) on Penguin Island. The key people in the wildlife tourism community at each location are divided into two main groups: managers, and tourists and other stakeholders.

Both Fraser Island and Penguin Island are managed by state government organisations. They are also both popular tourist destinations and used for recreational and, in the case of Fraser Island, residential purposes. The dingoes on

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<sup>1</sup> Some of the material in this chapter has been published in Burns (2006), Burns (in press) and Burns and Howard (2003).

Fraser Island and the penguins on Penguin Island share some commonalities that influence the way they are managed, but they also have some very obvious differences. Perhaps most notably, two human fatalities from dingo attacks have been recorded since European arrival on the Australian continent.<sup>2</sup> Increased attention has been paid to the management of both species and their interactions with people in recent years. Problems associated with these interactions often arise from competition over habitat, which Herda-Rapp and Goedeke (2005:1) note is a core issue in conflict between wildlife and people. Figure 2.1 illustrates the management relationship with wildlife, people and their interactions.

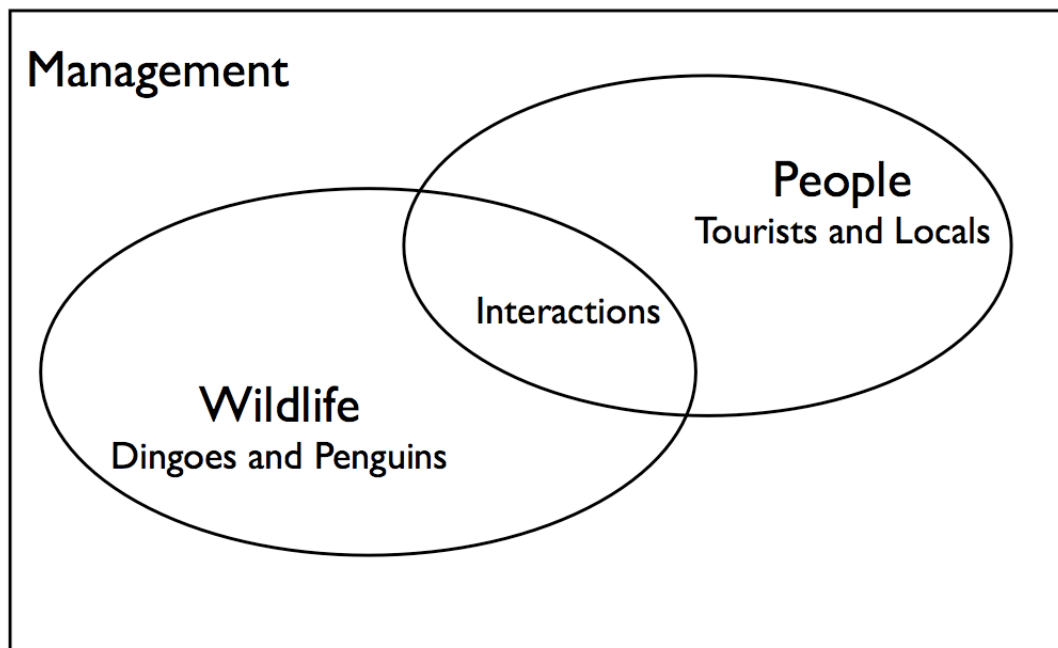


Figure 2.1: The Relationship between Wildlife, People and Management in Wildlife Tourism Settings.

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<sup>2</sup> The two deaths referred to are those of a baby at Uluru in the Northern Territory in 1980 (assumed, not proven), and a nine year old boy on Fraser Island in Queensland in 2001.

## **2.1 Fraser Island**

### **2.1.1 Location of Fraser Island**

Located off the Queensland coast, approximately 190km north of Brisbane, Fraser Island was given its European name after Captain James Fraser and his wife Eliza were shipwrecked there in 1836 (Sinclair 1990:76-77). The world's largest sand island, it is almost 125km long, 25km wide in some places, and over 160,000 hectares in area (Map 2.1). Fraser Island has a subtropical climate and features a wide range of vegetation types and interesting geographical features such as freshwater perched lakes and large sandblows.<sup>3</sup> The island is a designated World Heritage Area, and forms part of the Great Sandy National Park (EPA 2005a:119).

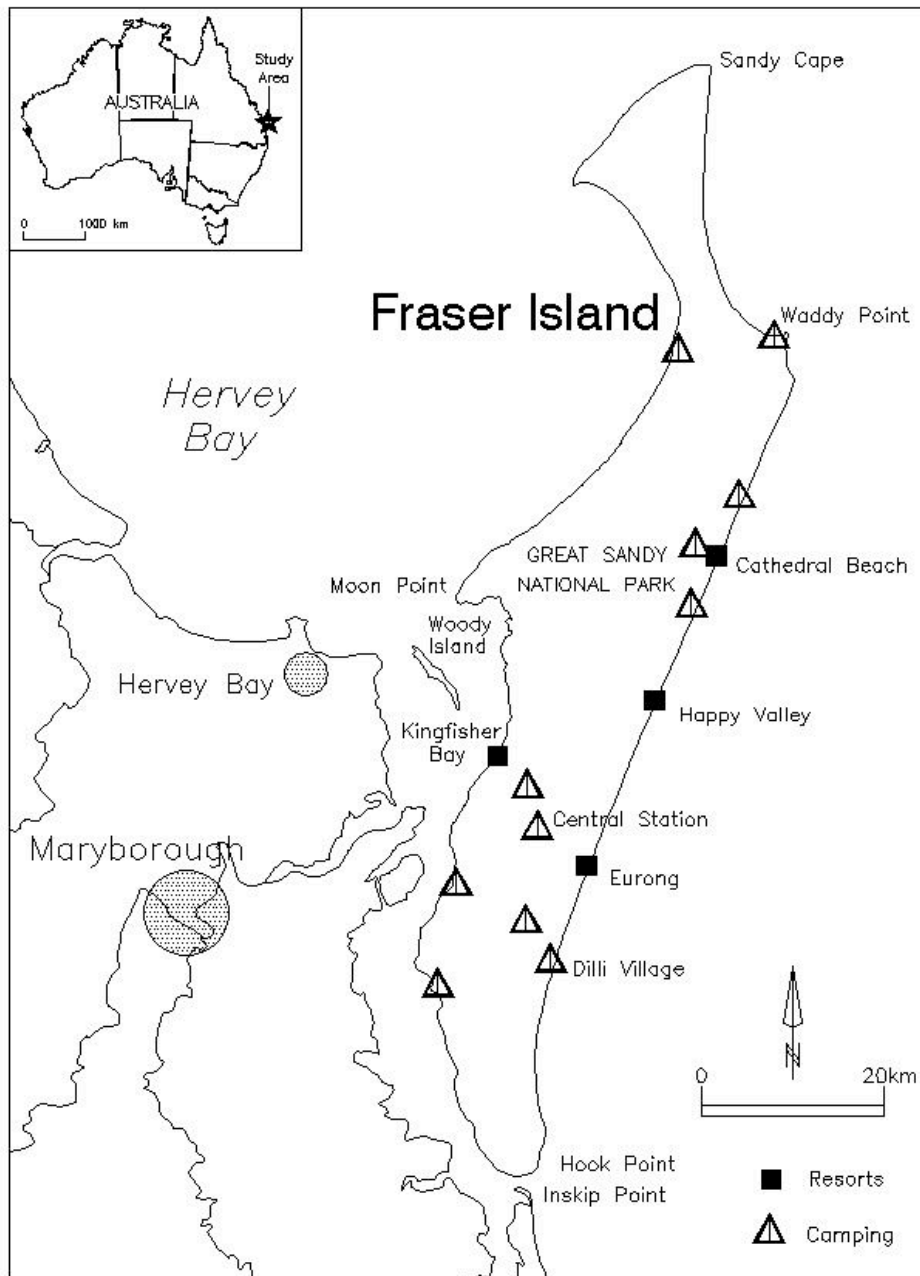
### **2.1.2 Wildlife on Fraser Island: Dingoes**

The opportunity to view a wide variety of wildlife species is known to be an important influence on tourists choosing Australia as a destination (Rodger and Moore 2004), and there is no doubt this motivation is also important for visitors to Fraser Island which supports a wide range of wildlife. More than 350 different bird species inhabit the island ranging from birds of prey such as sea eagles (Shephard *et al.* 2005) and osprey, to common birds such as pelicans, honeyeaters and cockatoos, and vulnerable birds such as the ground parrot (Chan and Mudie 2004). There are also 35 species of snakes, 25 skinks, 15 frogs, 9 turtles, 6 lizards, 2 goannas, and 24 species of freshwater fish (Hobson and Thrash 2005). Dingoes are not the only mammals on the island. There are also swamp wallabies, echidnas, possums, sugar

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<sup>3</sup> For further information on Fraser Island's geography and ecology see, for example, Bonyhady (1993), Carruthers *et al.* (1986), Dargavel (1995), EPA (2002), Fuller *et al.* (2005), Hadwen and Bunn (2005), Hadwen *et al.* (2003), Queensland Government (1991), Sinclair (1997), Spencer and Baxter (2006).

gliders and flying foxes. Brumbies (wild horses) were brought to the island to assist the logging industry in 1879 but the last of these have reportedly been removed by Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (Thompson, Shirreffs and McPhail 2003).



Map 2.1: Location of Fraser Island in the Great Sandy National Park, South East Queensland.

Evidence suggests that dingoes, *Canis lupus dingo*,<sup>4</sup> were first introduced to Australia by Asian seafarers between 3500 and 4000 years ago, perhaps on many occasions over several centuries<sup>5</sup> (Corbett 2001b:15). Dingoes found a niche in Australian ecosystems and spread throughout the continent. Dingoes also found a special place in many Aboriginal communities (Hamilton 1972, Meggitt 1965), and it is likely that dingoes came to Fraser Island with Aborigines (Rogers and Kaplan 2003:170).

The name ‘dingo’ comes from an Aboriginal word ‘dingu’, and the species is commonly defined as ‘a wild Australian dog’ (Oxford Dictionary 1998:227).<sup>6</sup> Since its arrival in Australia the species has developed characteristics that isolate it from its ancestors in Asia (Corbett 1995). The indigenesness of the Australian Dingo became a focus of public attention following the fatality in April 2001 (discussed in Chapter Seven), as did the purity of the dingoes found on Fraser Island. Because dingoes and domestic dogs can interbreed, there has been considerable hybridisation<sup>7</sup> since domestic dogs were introduced by Europeans. This is considered to be one of the greatest threats to conservation of dingoes across Australia.

The dingo population on Fraser Island is thought to maintain itself at approximately 150 (though the exact number is debatable), and is often argued to be one of the most

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<sup>4</sup> *Canis lupus* is the scientific name for wolves (e.g., Alexander *et al.* 2006), and *Canis familiaris* (e.g., Jones and Gosling 2005) is used for most other dogs, including domesticated ones. In recent years the Australian dingo has been labelled most frequently as *Canis lupus dingo*; however, *Canis familiaris dingo* is also used (e.g., Elledge *et al.* 2006). The use of *Canis lupus dingo* classifies the dingo as a subspecies of wolf while *Canis familiaris dingo* sees it more closely aligned with domestic dogs.

<sup>5</sup> Contrary to the popular perception that dingoes are unique to Australia, Corbett (2001a:164) argues that they can still be found in some south-east Asian countries, particularly Thailand.

<sup>6</sup> Corbett (1995:163) would disagree with this definition as he states that dingo populations remain in south-east Asian countries, such as Thailand.

<sup>7</sup> For an illustration of hybrid versus pure dingo populations in Australia, see Figure 10.1 in Corbett (1995:166).



‘pure’ in Australia.<sup>8</sup> This is acknowledged in the *Fraser Island dingo management strategy* which states:

Wildlife authorities recognise that because Fraser Island dingoes have not cross-bred with domestic or feral dogs to the same extent as most mainland populations, in time they may become the purest strain of dingo on the eastern Australian seaboard and perhaps Australia wide. Therefore, their conservation is of national significance (EPA 2001a:4).

Dingoes have an interesting, and tenuous, position in national legislation. They are protected within national parks, such as Kosciusko and on Fraser Island, yet considered a pest in much of mainland Australia (with the exception of NT and the ACT (Fleming *et al.* 2001:75-79)) where they prey on pastoral livestock such as lambs and calves (Dickman and Lunney 2001b, Rogers and Kaplan 2003:38). However, this legal anomaly is only relatively recent and prior to the 1970s dingoes were almost universally treated as vermin by government authorities inside as well as outside national parks (Davis 2001:40).

Among all the unfamiliar wildlife of Australia, the dingo (Figure 2.2) was one animal to which European explorers and settlers could relate. Several early settlers, including Governor Arthur Phillip and Captain John Hunter, Commander of the HMS Sirius, kept dingoes as pets (Breckwoldt 2001:5). However, as the pastoral industry became established and dingoes began to prey on sheep, guns, traps and poisons came to define the newcomers’ relationship with the dingo (Rogers and Kaplan 2003:38).

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<sup>8</sup> For further discussion on the indigenusness and purity of dingoes see Chipp (1983), Newsome and Corbett (1982, 1985), Wilton (2001), Woodall, Pavlov and Tolley (1993), Woodall, Pavlov and Twyford (1996).



Figure 2.2: A Dingo, *Canus lupus dingo*, on Fraser Island (photographer: G. L. Burns).

Bounties were placed on dingoes' scalps.<sup>9</sup> Colonial administrations and then state governments spent millions of dollars on 'dingo control'; including building and maintaining the dingo barrier fence<sup>10</sup> and more recently undertaking 1080<sup>11</sup> aerial baiting programs, on both private and public lands (Corbett 2001a:129, Fleming *et*

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<sup>9</sup> Bounties still exist, or have been reintroduced in some shires and states. Queensland's Wondai Shire Council, for example, approved a motion in 2001 to introduce and support at \$20 dingo bounty (Wondai Shire Council 2001) and the Victorian government introduced a bounty on 'wild dogs' (including dingoes) in 2007 (ABC 2007b).

<sup>10</sup> Built in the 1880s to keep dingoes out of the south-east part of the continent (where they had largely been exterminated), the dingo fence runs through central Queensland along the Qld/NSW and NSW/SA borders into South Australia. It is the longest fence in the world (DECC 2008).

<sup>11</sup> 1080 (Sodium monofluoroacetate) is an acute metabolic poison. It is particularly toxic to canids (Fleming *et al.* 2001:169) but not selective, and can be lethal to all mammals and is used to control other pest species, such as the Brush Tail possum in New Zealand (Eason, Warburton and Henderson 2000).

*al.* 2001:102). The goal of much research into dingoes has been to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of dingo control (for example, Best *et al.* 1974, Fleming *et al.* 2001, Gooding and Freeth 1964). More recently however, a growing interest in conserving this unique species has emerged (Davis and Leys 2001, Meek and Shields 2001, O'Neill 2002).

### **2.1.3 Fraser Island's Wildlife Tourism Community**

Figure 2.3 shows some of the key stakeholders interviewed in connection with wildlife tourism on Fraser Island. The groups included are representative of the main stakeholders with an expressed interest in wildlife tourism on Fraser Island. While the list of stakeholder groups who participated in this study is not exhaustive, their perceptions, as reported to me and recognised by other stakeholders, appear to fairly represent the diversity of opinion expressed about wildlife tourism and its management on Fraser Island.

Fraser Island is a national Australian icon. Consequently, there are numerous stakeholder groups wanting many different things from the island. All the groups identified here fit with Ryan's (2002:20) two-directional definition of stakeholders: while each group may have different interactions with dingoes, they are nevertheless each 'affected by' and 'can affect' the objectives of managing dingoes for tourism on Fraser Island. When viewing Figure 2.3 as a set of relationships, it is important to note that each group is not necessarily homogenous, although they are treated as such throughout this thesis.<sup>12</sup> It is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss all of

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<sup>12</sup> Throughout this thesis I discuss each stakeholder group in a way that may suggest its existence as a single entity. Of course, it is not. When I comment on stakeholder support for an action, it is important to recognise that there may be variations in levels of support within the same stakeholder group. Any such group is, after all, made up of individuals. However, grouping individuals in this way provides a useful conceptual framework.

these groups. Managers, tourists (and some others) are introduced here because they will be the focus of later discussion and analysis.

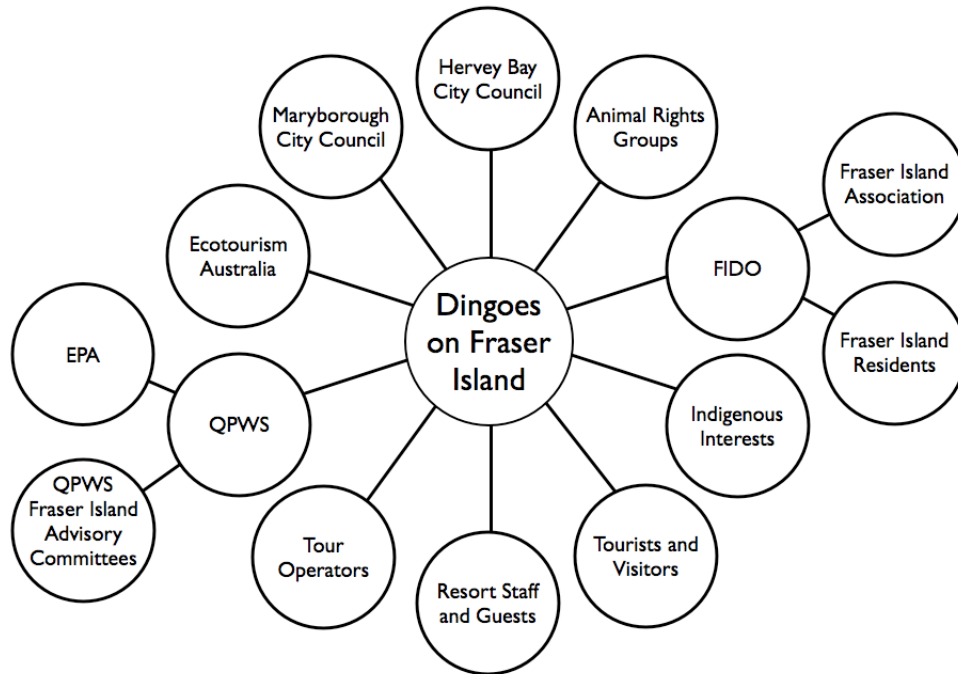


Figure 2.3: A Schematic Representation of the Numerous Stakeholder Groups that Comprise the Wildlife Tourism Community for Dingoes on Fraser Island (EPA = Environmental Protection Agency, QPWS = Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, FIDO = Fraser Island Defenders Organisation).

#### 2.1.3.1 *Fraser Island managers*

Fraser Island became a site for sand mining in the 1960s while under the management of the Queensland Forestry Department (Sinclair and Corris 1994). The island also has a long history of use for logging as well as cattle grazing (Baker 1996:38, Dargavel 1995). The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS), a division of the Queensland Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), took over as

the governing body from the Forestry Department in 1991, and the island was declared a World Heritage Area in 1992 following development opposition by environmental groups (Bonyhady 1993, Sinclair and Corris 1994) and subsequent recommendations of the Fitzgerald Commission of Inquiry (Queensland Government 1991).

The island forms part of the Great Sandy National Park (see Map 2.1), and contains small areas of freehold and unallocated state land (EPA 2005a: 120) upon which resorts and residences have been built. These are governed by either the mainland-based Harvey Bay or Maryborough City Councils, depending on their locations on the island.

#### *2.1.3.2 Tourists and other Fraser Island stakeholders*

Fraser Island is home to approximately 200 residents most of whom have lived there for many years. Some of these residents are members of the Fraser Island Association (FIA). The Fraser Island Defenders Organisation (FIDO) is a group made-up primarily of non-residents, which has been instrumental in the campaign for conservation issues on Fraser Island. Prior to European contact, three Aboriginal tribes used the island. Other local stakeholders with a vested interest in the island are the residents of the nearby towns of Hervey Bay and Maryborough (see Map 2.1).

The Butchalla<sup>13</sup> Aboriginal people occupied the central region of Fraser Island (which they called Kgari) (Sinclair 1990:47). Fraser Island was gazetted as an Aboriginal reserve in 1860, but the gazettal was revoked two years later due to the

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<sup>13</sup> Also spelt as Badtjala (for example, in Sinclair 1994:51).

discovery of extensive stands of valuable timber on the island (Sinclair 1990:58). At the turn of the century, indigenous people from the island and groups from the mainland (Long 1970:95) were moved into the Bogimbah Creek reserve on Fraser Island which was under government control from 1897 to 1900 and “thereafter as an Anglican mission supported by State subsidy until its demise in August 1904” (Evans 1991:71). Some parts of the island are currently under Native Title claims (National Native Title Tribunal 1996).

The number of visitors to Fraser Island grew significantly following its declaration as a World Heritage Area in 1992 (see Appendix One), with current visitor numbers of approximately 300 000 *per annum* (EPA 2005b:21). Most visitors arrive by ferry and stay at resorts or apply to QPWS for camping permits, and their numbers are therefore easily recorded. A small number, usually day trippers, also arrive by private vessel.

This growth in numbers has been met by associated demand for better infrastructure and services to the island. As noted by Ryan (2002:18) about tourism in general, “Growing demand leads to more building, more development, and in that development, that which was originally sought, disappears.” While some Fraser Island residents and some long term visitors have voiced concern about the environmental impacts of tourism on the island, to date, the key attractions that draw tourists remain.<sup>14</sup> However, the tourist landscape has changed and the way different types of tourists use the island has differing effects. Long time users of the island, for example, recall years when they saw few tourists other than family campers and fishers. The island’s focus for international tourists has dramatically increased since

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<sup>14</sup> Studies have been done on the degradation of Fraser Island’s ecology, which is a key attraction for tourists (*e.g.*, Hadwen 2003, Hadwen *et al.* 2004, Hadwen *et al.* 2007, and Kurtboke *et al.* 2007).

its World Heritage listing and this has brought with it not only more tourists, but also more types of tourists.

Visitors to the island no longer need to own a four-wheel drive vehicle to traverse the beaches and the island's unsealed roads. Four-wheel-drives can be hired from resorts on the island and on the mainland, tours taken by four-wheel drive buses, and the island can be accessed by both ferry and aeroplane. This has opened Fraser Island as a destination for backpackers, who commonly traverse the island by hiring a four-wheel drive in groups of eight to ten, as well as conference delegates, family and school groups, and others.

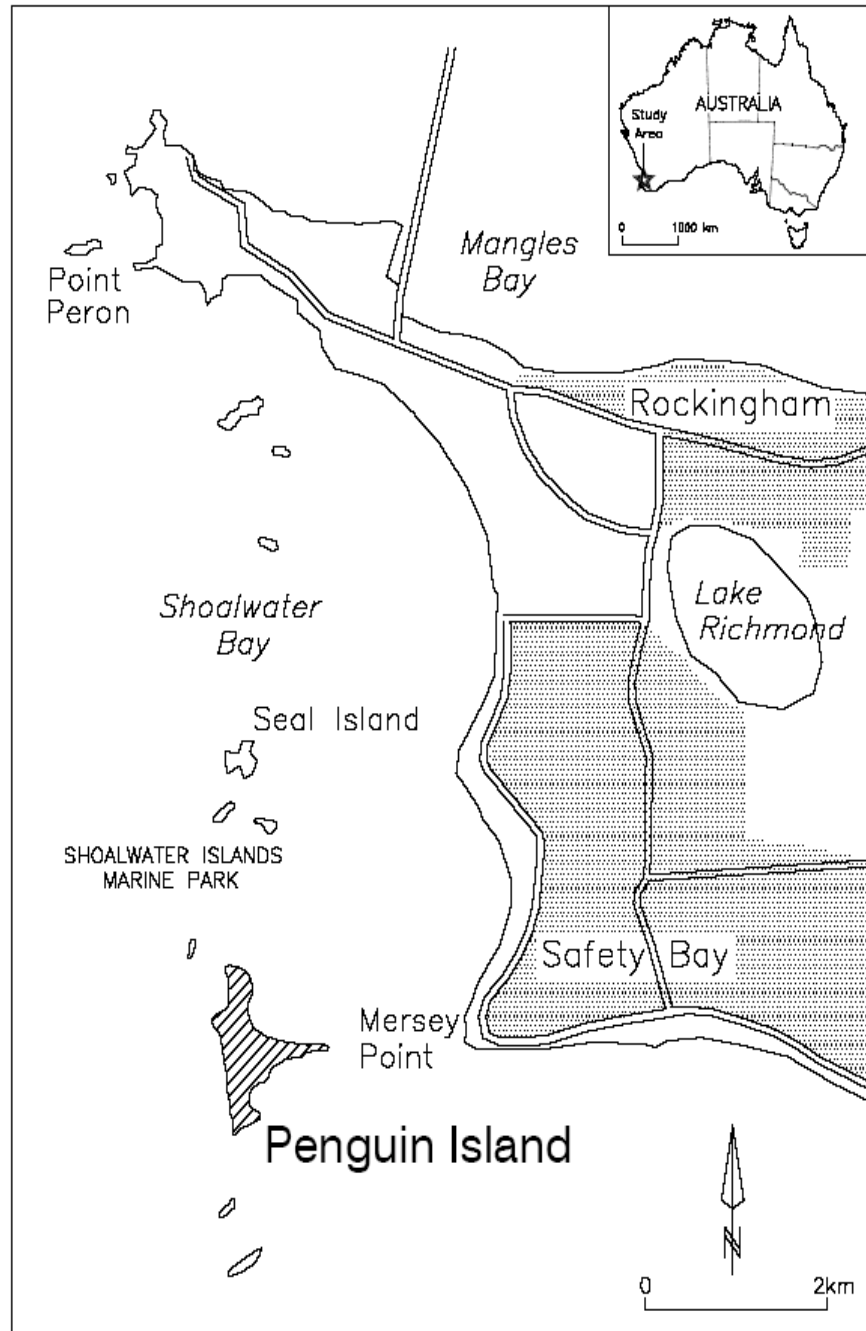
## **2.2 Penguin Island**

### **2.2.1 Location of Penguin Island**

Penguin Island lies 700m offshore from Mersey Point in Safety Bay near Rockingham in Western Australia. At 32°17'S, 115°41'E it is 42km south-west of the state capital, Perth, and has a Mediterranean climate. The 12.5ha island is the largest in chain of limestone rocks and small islands in the bay (see Map 2.2) and is linked to the mainland by a partly submerged sandbar. Today, the island lies within the Shoalwater Islands Marine Park and is designated an A-Class reserve (Orr and Pobar 1992)<sup>15</sup> vested in the Conservation Commission.

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<sup>15</sup> In this category of protected area, conservation is considered the highest priority for management owing to the presence of a fragile or unique ecosystem (Dans 1997).



Map 2.2: Location of Penguin Island in the Shoalwater Islands Marine Park, Western Australia.

### 2.2.2 Penguin Island Wildlife: Penguins

Little, or fairy, penguins (*Eudyptula minor*) breed along the Australian coast from Port Stephens in northern NSW to Fremantle in WA (Stahel and Gales 1987), and on islands off the southern Australian coast (Reilly and Bamford 1975). Penguin Island



marks the northern and western limits of the Little Penguin breeding range (Wienecke, Wooller and Klomp 1995:440). This rather isolated colony of approximately 1000-1200 individuals has maintained a long established population on the island where between 500 and 650 pairs breed annually (Dunlop, Klomp and Wooller 1988:95, Wienecke, Wooller and Klomp 1995:440-441). It is the largest known colony in Western Australia (Figure 2.4).<sup>16</sup>



Figure 2.4: A Little Penguin, *Eudyptula minor*, in the Penguin Experience on Penguin Island (photographer: G. L. Burns).

Although the Little Penguin is not listed as an endangered species, some studies suggest it is under threat and populations around Australia are declining (Boersma 1991 and Dann 1992). The threat is greatest where the colonies are situated close to

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<sup>16</sup> The Little Penguin colony on Penguin Island is the largest known colony in Western Australia (Wienecke, Wooller and Klomp 1995:441); however, it is still relatively small by national standards. The colony on Phillip Island, Victoria, for example, numbers approximately 20 000 birds (Marchant and Higgins 1990).

expanding urban developments (Wienecke, Wooller and Klomp 1995:441) as is the case for the Penguin Island colony. Other bird species breeding on the island include Silver Gulls, Bridled Terns (Dunlop, Klomp and Wooller 1988), Crested and Caspian Terns (Crane, Thomson and Dans nd) and, in recent years, Pelicans. The island is also home to a large population of King Skinks (*Egernia kingii*) and occasionally visited by solitary male Sea Lions.<sup>17</sup>

### **2.2.3 Penguin Island's Wildlife Tourism Community**

Figure 2.5 shows some of the key stakeholders interviewed for this thesis in connection with wildlife tourism on Penguin Island. As with Fraser Island, the groups represent the main stakeholders with expressed interest in wildlife tourism for this case study. Similarly the list of stakeholders is not exhaustive; nevertheless their perceptions, as reported to me and recognised by other stakeholders, appear to fairly represent the diversity of opinion expressed about wildlife tourism and its management on Penguin Island.

Penguin Island is not World Heritage listed, and of minimal ecological significance compared with the variety and complexity of the Fraser Island ecology. It does not share the same national iconic status as Fraser Island and is not publicised as widely as a tourism destination. These factors may, in part, explain why fewer stakeholder groups were identified for wildlife tourism on Penguin Island.

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<sup>17</sup> Male sea lions are more commonly found on Seal Island, to the north of Penguin Island (see Map 2.2), where they migrate to after breeding on islands about 200km north of Perth (Crane, Thomson and Dans nd).

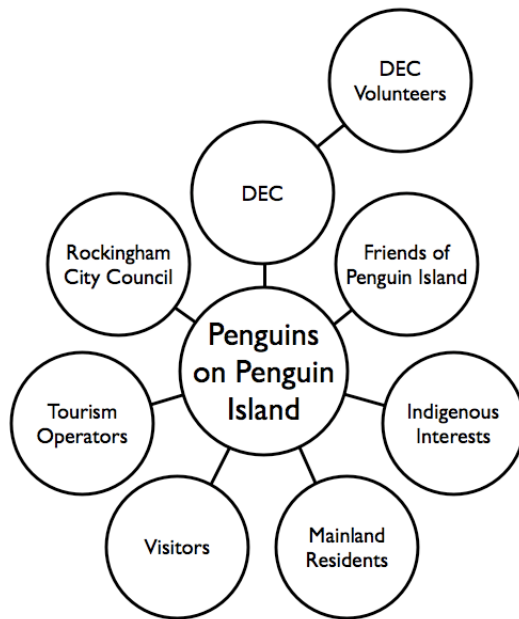


Figure 2.5: A Schematic Representation of the Various Stakeholder Groups that Comprise the Wildlife Tourism Community for Penguins on Penguin Island.

#### 2.2.3.1 *Penguin Island managers*

Penguin Island was managed by the Rockingham Road Board in the early 1900s before becoming the responsibility of the State Gardens Board in 1949, who leased it to a private company for holiday huts in the 1950s. Between 1969 and 1987 Penguin Island Proprietary Limited leased eight hectares of the island (almost three-quarters of it) for an annual fee of \$4 (Wienecke, Wooller and Klomp 1995:443-4).

A first draft management plan for the island, in 1984, emphasised a need to control public access, and to restore and protect wildlife habitat. It suggested implementing a comprehensive public awareness programme and to encouraging research on the

island (Chape 1984). When the lease to Penguin Island Pty Ltd terminated and the Western Australian Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) took over in 1987, some recommendations in the draft management plan, such as the construction of designated pathways, had already been implemented (Wienecke, Wooller and Klomp 1995:444). A new management plan was drawn up in July 1992. It recommended that past use patterns of the island were inappropriate, and that Penguin Island should become a conservation park (Orr and Pobar 1992, Orr, Pobar and Haswell 1990). In 2006, CALM was renamed the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC), which continues to manage the island.

#### *2.2.3.2 Tourists and other Penguin Island stakeholders*

With no direct supply of fresh water, and located only 700m off the shore of the mainland, no one resides on Penguin Island. Given its low tide access by sandbar from the mainland it is reasonable to assume that the island was used by Aboriginal people, although no evidence has been found to indicate long-term habitation. The earliest recorded human resident was Seaforth McKenzie, a hermit who settled on the island at the turn of the century (Wienecke, Wooller and Klomp 1995:443). Evidence of his habitation remains visible in the form of caves and a well.

On the nearby mainland are approximately 97 000 residents in 15 suburbs that constitute the rapidly expanding city of Rockingham (City of Rockingham 2007). Other stakeholders who have a vested interest in the island are volunteers working for CALM on the island, whose job is primarily to provide information, and interpretation, for visitors at the Penguin Island Discovery Centre and assist with daily running of the Penguin Experience. A group referring to themselves as the 'Friends of Shoalwater Bay' also need introducing here as they were instrumental in

lobbying to set Penguin Island up as a protected area in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

It is difficult to determine the exact number of visitors<sup>18</sup> to Penguin Island annually, partly because the island is located so close to the mainland and is therefore easily accessible. Those who travel by ferry are issued tickets for their travel and therefore their numbers are easily recorded. Other tourists who can be counted include those who visit the island as part of a licensed tour group; the island is a destination for several licensed kayaking tour companies, for example. People who arrive by walking across the sandbar,<sup>19</sup> or by private vessel, are not formally counted but their numbers are estimated by DEC for each financial year. For the 2006-2007 financial year total visitation numbers were estimated to be 75 000 (35 000 arriving by ferry or with a tour operator and 40 000 by private vessel or crossing the sandbar). It is expected that most of these visitors live close enough to make the island an easy day trip.<sup>20</sup> Visitor numbers to the island, as estimated by CALM and DEC, from 1998 to 2007 are detailed in Appendix Two.

Key attractions for visitors to Penguin Island include its good (shallow and safe) swimming beaches, nearby reefs for snorkeling and scuba diving, and the large number and diversity of sea birds. Its significance however, what makes it special as a tourism destination along this coastline, is the fact that is home to the penguins.

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<sup>18</sup> I have used the label of visitor here, rather than tourist, because there are no facilities for overnight stays on Penguin Island. Thus, people travelling to it for the day fit more correctly with the definition of visitor, or day-tripper, as described in Chapter One.

<sup>19</sup> Crossing from the mainland to the island by sandbar is not recommended by DEC or the ferry operator, and warning signs exist at both locations about the potential dangers of this activity. The cautions may appear financially motivated; however, in February 2008 36 people had to be rescued from the sandbar (ABC 2008).

<sup>20</sup> In a survey of 107 visitors to Penguin Island in 2001, Hughes and Morrison-Saunders (2005) found that most respondents (76%) were Western Australian residents. This correlates with Dans' (1997) observation that the island is a major local recreational venue.

## **2.3 Conclusion**

This chapter has introduced the two case study locations, the key people and key wildlife that will be the focus of this thesis. It has outlined the significance of dingoes on Fraser Island and penguins on Penguin Island, described who visits each island and who is responsible for management. The discussion has shown that while the two case studies have much in common, they also have many differences. These will be described and discussed further in Section Three, where the Fraser Island case study is expanded in Chapters Seven and Eight before being compared with Penguin Island in Chapter Nine and analysed in Chapter Ten. Focussing on the case studies in this way serves to shed light on wildlife tourism in the Australian context. Before then, however, we need to turn to an explanation of, and justification for, the research methods and strategies chosen for this study.



## SECTION ONE: SETTING THE SCENE

### CHAPTER THREE

#### **Methodology**

##### **3.0 Research Design**

The philosophical starting point for this thesis comes from my own ontological and epistemological position that people construct the meaning and significance of their realities. Like any research project, this one fits into a wider research paradigm which starts with overarching ontological and epistemological foundations followed by discourses on methodology, designs and methods (Sarantakos 2005:29). This starting point then guides the methodological, theoretical and analytical frameworks utilised in the thesis.

As will be discussed throughout this section, the guiding ontology is social constructivism and the epistemology is interpretivism. The methodological framework is one that is flexible and qualitative, the research strategies are case studies and ethnography, and a variety of data collection methods have been utilised within these strategies.



Initial research for this thesis was based primarily on the compilation and analysis of existing research that has been undertaken in both the Australian and international context. This allowed the identification of key factors pertaining to a range of issues in wildlife-based tourism, and an emergent design (Maykut and Moorehouse 1994:44). Following this step, field research was undertaken through interaction with stakeholder groups at two wildlife tourism destinations; Penguin Island in Western Australia and Fraser Island in Queensland.

Empirical data were collected during periods of fieldwork undertaken between December 2000 and May 2004. Intensive periods of research were conducted on Fraser Island and in the nearby coastal towns of Hervey Bay and Maryborough in June 2001, September 2001, May 2002, May 2003 and May 2004. Similar intensive periods were spent on Penguin Island and in the nearby town of Rockingham in December 2000 - January 2001, December 2001 - January 2002, September 2002, December 2002 - January 2003 and January - February 2004. A final trip was made to Penguin Island in December 2007.

During ethnographic-style fieldwork at the case study locations data were collected from interviews with a wide range of stakeholders willing to participate in the research. These findings were then supplemented with data collected via participant observation and from documentary sources. Given the nature of this investigation, documentary research focussed on relevant government policy documents as well as newspaper articles and educational/interpretive material distributed to visitors and locals at each study area. This documentary data collection took place for the duration of the research; that is, from January 2000 until May 2008. Such a

synthesis of complementary techniques allows for triangulation of the data, which in turn strengthens reliability and validity of the findings.

Some of the data used for this thesis comes from a shared data set. Two of the five fieldtrips made to Fraser Island (in June and September 2001) were undertaken with a fellow PhD candidate.<sup>1</sup> Although writing different theses, we both needed to interview stakeholders on Fraser Island at the same time, and it was not practical to interview each person twice. Together we devised a set of questions that satisfied both of our requirements. Further detail on interviews and other methods employed is provided below. A third fieldtrip to Fraser Island (in May 2003) was undertaken with three honours students, where some observations and relevant documents were jointly collected and shared.<sup>2</sup>

The strategic approaches (ethnography and case studies) outlined below were chosen for their ability to locate the researcher in the optimal position to gain the best possible outcomes from the research. The variety of data collection methods utilised within these strategies are then discussed, before the guiding principles for data analysis and theorisation are explained.

### **3.1 Research Strategies**

The research utilised a combination of two research strategies (ethnography and case studies), and several data collection methods within these strategies (single and group interviews, documents and participant observation).

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<sup>1</sup> A paper based on this shared data set and illustrating the interrelatedness of our projects has been published in the journal *Tourism Management* (Burns and Howard 2003). See also Howard (2007).

<sup>2</sup> One joint publication resulted from this period of research (Hytten and Burns 2007a) and one joint conference paper (Hytten and Burns 2007b).

### **3.1.1 Ethnography**

The research methodology employed to guide the data collection for this thesis contains elements found in the traditional anthropological technique of ethnography. Ethnography owes its origins to the early fieldwork of Bronislaw Malinowski in the Trobriand Islands during World War One (McLeish 1993), and is often cited as a key feature that distinguishes anthropology from other social sciences (Monaghan and Just 2000). Its modern usage, however, extends beyond anthropology and into the other social science disciplines.

I gained first hand experience with ethnography as a research strategy during my research-based Master of Science in Anthropology in the 1990s when I conducted fieldwork in Fiji.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, I am well aware of the various merits and pitfalls of this kind of research. This history equipped me with the skills and ability to choose what, and how, to use ethnography in the context of this PhD research.

A notable advantage of ethnography is that it advocates “spending time ... and witnessing the social and environmental context of human action” (Holden 2005:138). In doing this, “the social anthropologist can open nuances of understanding that may not be apparent through the application of research techniques of other disciplines” (Holden 2005:138). The inevitable depth of understanding that this strategy achieves then goes beyond the studies of some other disciplines and, importantly, gives a cultural context to both the questions being asked by the researcher and responses obtained. Ultimately then, a holistic understanding of the research topic is developed; one that stresses “processes, relationships, connections and interdependency” (Denscombe 1998:69).

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<sup>3</sup> This research has been published in Burns (1993, 1994, 1996, 2003).

While such a longitudinal focus and diachronic, rather than synchronic, exposure is laudable there are obvious difficulties of this approach in the contemporary context where theses have strict time limits and narrow budgetary constraints. Some of the values of ethnography can still be utilised by undertaking several short trips to the field site, as I have done in this research, and by making full use of modern technology that increasingly allows enhanced contact with key people and institutions while the researcher is not actually in the field. For example, I signed up for the 'google news alert service', searching the words 'dingo' and 'penguin', for the duration of my candidature. This allowed me to monitor and keep up to date with any news stories pertaining to these two key features of my research. There is also much searching that can be done on websites, a source not available at the time Malinowski started doing ethnography. Also, the two sites investigated for this research are not particularly remote. Therefore, key people and governing bodies were readily contactable via telephone and mail – something that was not possible during research for my Masters degree.

Also of value to this study, from the aims of an ethnography, is the special attention afforded to the way people being studied see their world. The focus of this research is the people, in the context of wildlife tourism, and thus my concern as an ethnographer is to find out how the members of this group understand things, what meanings they attach to events and the way they perceive their reality (Denscombe 1998:69).

Ethnography was also chosen for its dedication to naturalism. In order to produce a pure and detailed description I wanted to avoid disrupting the situation at each case study location, thus preserving the natural state of affairs. The ethnographic

approach of going into the field to witness events first hand in their natural setting makes this possible.

Ethnography, like the case studies explained below, is a strategy and not a method. It is an overarching concept that helps to design research, but does not in and of itself collect data. Instead, like case studies, it employs numerous methods and sources for data collection. Also, like case studies, it occurs in natural settings where depth of understanding is a goal. Therefore, the approaches of the case study and the ethnography complement each other well, with a key difference being that ethnography is not necessarily as theory driven though it can be used as a means for both, or either, developing or testing theories.<sup>4</sup>

### **3.1.2 Case Studies**

The core of this research involves an in-depth examination of two contemporary settings, or case studies. Comparative case studies were chosen as a research strategy to complement the ethnography because they look for patterns in lives, actions and people's words in the context of the case as a whole (Neuman 2006:321). Case studies are a preferred strategy recommended by Yin (2003:1) when 'how' or 'why' research questions are being asked about contemporary events over which the researcher has little or no control, as is the situation in the context of this research. Consequently, case studies are used extensively both in tourism research and teaching (Beeton 2005:37) and in anthropology research and teaching.

“Case studies, like experiments, are generalisable to theoretical proposition and not to populations or universes” (Yin 2003:1). In this sense, the case study facilitates

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<sup>4</sup> For further information on the role of ethnography in tourism research see, for example, Cole (2005) and Jennings (2005:112-114).

analytical generalisation rather than a representative sample.<sup>5</sup> In general, a case study may be thought of as a rich narrative that provides enough information to allow the reader to determine whether the findings of the specific case study possibly apply to other people or settings (Yin 2003). The two case studies examined in this thesis can be applied as an example, but also as a comparison and lesson for other places with similar socioeconomic and environmental conditions.

The case study approach provides a framework for discussion, but is also concerned with the rigorous and fair presentation of empirical data (Yin 1994:2). The interplay between stakeholders in the context of wildlife tourism is a complex social phenomenon, and the goal of understanding it is well suited for the rigours a case study investigation entails. Such an approach retains “the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events” (Yin 1994:3) essential to the understanding sought in this research.

Different types of case studies are identified in the case study literature (see, for example, Stake 2000:437-8 in Silverman 2005:127-8, and Saratankos 2005:211-212). The two cases used in this thesis do not represent one type, but rather combine several. They can each be classified as intrinsic case studies because they are comprised of elements that make them of interest on their own, which is one of the reasons they were chosen. They are also instrumental case studies because they can, and will, be examined to provide insight into a particular issue: the issue in this thesis being wildlife tourism. Finally, when combined, they provide a collective case study of the general phenomenon of wildlife tourism.

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<sup>5</sup> For further information on the validity of case studies in tourism research, as well as a discussion on the criticisms and limitations of them as a methodological tool, see Beeton (2005).

Case studies that enquire into contemporary issues within real-life contexts have different purposes. The three most commonly cited purposes are exploratory, descriptive or explanatory (Yin 2003:2). These are not exclusive terms, and one study can be used for all three purposes, as is the case in this thesis.

The similarities between Fraser Island and Penguin Island allow some generalisability, but this is undeniably limited due to the significance of their differences; and it is partly for these differences that they were chosen. The differences, particularly those related to the wildlife tourism communities, type of wildlife, type of tourists and key management issues provide important opportunities for comparison and contrast between the cases. This is a more important goal in satisfying the aims of this thesis than generalisability. The thesis focuses on, and thus uses the cases for, theory building and theoretical explanation. They offer examples of wildlife tourism at two different ends of the spectrum. As such, the two different contexts give strength to the thesis.

Although Fraser and Penguin Islands have been the focus of empirical research for this study, they are not the only cases relied upon and, where relevant, material from other published case studies is included. Like the case studies described by Denscombe (1998:30-31), the ones used for this research each provide a spotlight on one instance of wildlife tourism, rather than a mass study. In doing this, they are also indepth studies, undertaken in the natural settings of the two islands, that focus on interconnected relationships and processes with an aim of holistic understanding.

Sarantakos (2005:211) refers to case studies as a research model for the same reason that Denscombe (1998) considers them a research strategy; they are not a method of data collection, but rather the vehicle for employing multiple sources and methods.

Explanation of the range of sources and methods chosen within the case study approach used in this thesis follows.

## **3.2 Data Collection Methods**

This section discusses the rationale for sampling, and the type and number of interviews conducted as a method of data collection. The use of secondary data sources, literature and documents, is also discussed, as well as the important role of participant observation.

### **3.2.1 Sampling**

My case study choices were driven by purposive sampling. This does not mean that they were chosen simply for their convenience and accessibility. Clearly, both of these factors are important in any choice of study location; however, of far greater importance to the choice was the need for each case to illustrate the phenomenon of wildlife tourism. As a more qualitative than quantitative based study, the sampling was also theoretically grounded. These two sampling types, theoretical and purposive, were chosen for their flexibility in allowing interactive manipulation of sampling activities, theory and analysis as the research progresses (Mason 1996:100, in Silverman 2005:133).<sup>6</sup>

Purposive sampling, as opposed to random sampling, was employed in all the data collection techniques within this research process. The depth of information from particular subject types is more important for this research than is the sample size or its representativeness of a population, though the latter is a key consideration. Apart

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<sup>6</sup> For further information on purposive and theoretical sampling see Bryman (2008:414-416).



from this issue, purposive sampling can obtain generalisability (Silverman 2000:234). According to Maykut and Moorehouse (1994:57), generalisation is not typically a goal of qualitative study. However, where theory building is important to the qualitative research, Silverman's claim is noteworthy.

Purposive sampling selects cases with a specific purpose in mind (Neuman 2006:198), making it similar to the non-probability sampling discussed by Denscombe (1998:118-119). Denscombe (1998:118-119) says that the selection of people to interview is likely to be based on this type of sampling, in which interviewees are deliberately chosen because of their expected contribution. In this research, interviewees known to be information rich and relevant to the research topic were purposely chosen. I sought out a range of persons within stakeholder groups to elicit wide and divergent perspectives, initially writing letters to key individuals to introduce myself and the project. As a strategy, this is called maximum variation sampling (Maykut and Moorehouse 1994:56-58).

Snowball sampling was also used as a way of identifying and selecting interviewees. It is a procedure used when the researcher begins the research with a limited set of potential participants, eventually leading to participants in a network who are related, directly or indirectly, to the initial contacts (Neuman 2006:199). The search for new participants ceases when saturation in the data received through interviewing is reached (see Figure 3.1). This is known as "theoretical saturation" (Bryman 2008:416).

As a consequence, the research for this thesis did not commence with a commitment to a defined number of interviews. The aim was to reach a stage where I was able to fairly accurately anticipate what interviewees were going to say. I continued to

conduct interviews until there was much repetition in responses to the guiding questions and little new material was being generated.

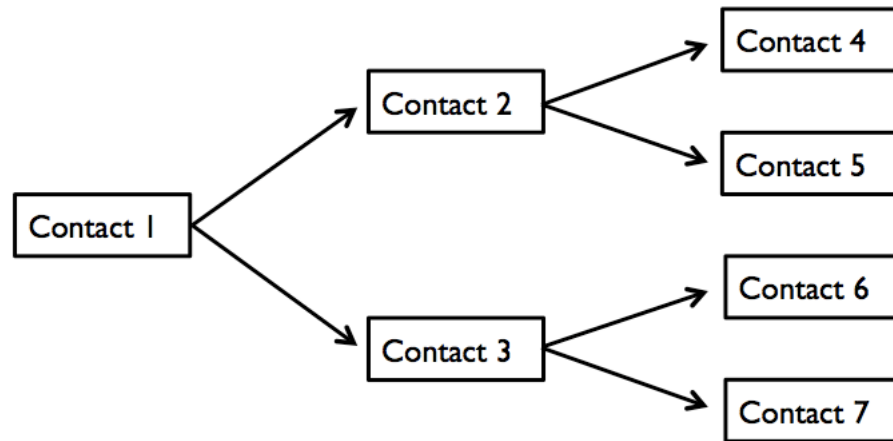


Figure 3.1: Making Contact with Participants through Snowball Sampling.

The sampling procedure for the collection of documents was similar in that a saturation point was sought, and I began with the aim of collecting as much as possible that was relevant to the topic of wildlife tourism, especially in relation to my two case studies. However, just as I identified some key stakeholders at each case study location to interview, so too some key documents, particularly those related to government policy, were sought. These are discussed further below in the sections on interviewing and documents.

### **3.2.2 Interviewing**

Interviews conducted during this research were generally in-depth and semi-structured, allowing for focussed questioning while encouraging a broad response from the interviewee. Such interviews are a useful research technique to investigate complex behaviours, collect diversity of opinion, fill gaps in knowledge of the interviewer and allow for empowerment of the interviewee (Dunn 2000:52). To

understand why people act in the way they do, there is a need to understand the meaning and significance they give to their actions. The in-depth interview is one way, though certainly not the only way, of gaining this type of understanding (Jones 2004:257).

Denscombe (1998:113) describes semi-structured interviewing as being on a sliding scale between more and less structured. For this thesis the amount of structuring was tailored to suit the stakeholder group. For example, interviews with government employees during their office hours tended to be more structured and less open-ended. In one interview with a managerial director the interviewee only briefly answered the questions asked, offered no additional information when prompted, and the interview lasted approximately 20 minutes. By contrast, interviews with residents in their homes tended to be less structured and more open-ended. For example, one notable interview took place on a former activist's home verandah over a period of six hours. They all had in common, however, a flexibility not found in structured interviews, to allow interviewees to use their own words and develop their own thoughts. This type of approach to interviewing is aimed at "discovery" rather than "checking" (Denscombe 1998:113) and, as such, is a useful method for facilitating the gathering of information about complex issues.

More than 70 interviews, varying in length from a few minutes to several hours, were conducted between December 2000 and May 2004 and the voices of those interviewed are presented throughout the thesis. The format for all interviews was similar in that they were in-depth, semi-structured and open-ended. The interview questions that were asked necessarily varied between islands and stakeholder groups. However, they were all designed to ascertain the interviewee's place and role in the

wildlife tourism community, their perceptions of sustainability and wildlife tourism, attitudes toward and interactions with wildlife, as well as opinions about wildlife management. This format enabled the interviewees to explain the issues that were important to them, rather than the interviewer influencing their voices by presupposing knowledge of the issues and asking for specific comment. Stakeholder groups sampled in this way include QPWS and CALM staff, tour operators, volunteers, resort staff and guests, residents, tourists, and traditional owners (see Figures 2.3 and 2.5).

Interviews were either recorded to tape or mini-disk and later transcribed, or reconstructed from notes taken during interviews. Content analysis was then used as the initial method to analyse the content of the transcribed material. Transcripts were entered into the N-Vivo software package for the analysis of qualitative data and coded for theme and content.<sup>7</sup>

Not all interviews were recorded on tape or mini-disk, although the vast majority were. There were some occasions when the use of a tape recorder was inappropriate, for example, when interviewing a stakeholder on Fraser Island who was clearly very emotional about the culling of dingoes before the interview began and cried during it. Written notes were always made at the time of the interview and expanded as soon as possible afterwards. This process of adding details to the notes immediately post interview was extremely valuable, especially in situations when interviews were not recorded on tape or mini-disk. My choice not to audio record some interviews was a deliberate part of my desired aim to be as non-intrusive as possible in all

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<sup>7</sup> N-Vivo is a powerful and versatile qualitative software package which superseded QSR NUD\*IST. It is produced by Qualitative Solutions and Research Pty Ltd (as is NUD\*IST) and allows the importation of projects developed using NUD\*IST.

empirical data collection. The desire was to capture the most natural setting possible, and to influence people's thoughts and recollection of events as little as possible. This naturalness has already been discussed in relation to the choice of case studies and ethnography as research strategies.<sup>8</sup>

### *3.2.2.1 Group Interviews*

Interviews mainly took place on a face-to-face and one-to-one basis; however, some group interviews were also used where appropriate. The number in the group depended on many factors, such as availability and willingness of participants, and lead-up time to the session. Where ever possible the group size and composition was chosen to enable group members to participate in a discussion within which they felt comfortable. The minimum number in my group interviews was two (a husband and wife on Fraser Island) and the maximum was 22 (in a Bird Week workshop also on Fraser Island).

Group interviews were most commonly used in settings where individual interviews were not possible or deemed inappropriate by the researcher; for example, in camp grounds on Fraser Island where a group of people were holidaying together and were all keen to be part of the study. Opportunity also arose to use this method as a substitute for individual interviews in the homes of some Fraser Island residents who had invited friends to also attend a previously arranged interview.

Interviews with individuals were a preferred method of data collection. Interviewing is a method I used extensively in my Masters fieldwork in Fiji and Honours fieldwork in Nepal. Like all methods, it has some disadvantages but for this study

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<sup>8</sup> For further information on interviewing in tourism research see Jennings (2005).

they were outweighed by the advantages of depth of information that can be obtained from a focus on one individual at a time, the relaxed relationship that can be formed with the interviewee, and the lack of interference from other people present. A weakness of group interviews is that they can be dominated by a few vocal participants who influence other members of the group. In some groups it is possible to get combinations of participants who are wary of what they say because of who else is in the room. This was very evident, for example, at a Fraser Island Association (FIA) meeting where a representative from a tourist operation on the island was invited, but did not attend. Things were then said about that person and that operation that I suspect would not have been said had the representative been present. Similar situations occurred at meetings I attended for other organisations (FIDO, for example), demonstrating the importance of the researcher being aware of who is present and how this may affect conversations.

Interviews with a group of people were undertaken in situations where they were most convenient; for example, when collecting data for the Penguin Island case study I was invited to attend a meeting with local stakeholders who shared a concern for the region. On Fraser Island a specific case for group interviews arose in the form of Bird Week. This annual event started at Kingfisher Bay Resort and Village (KBRV) in May 2002 and I was invited as a guest presenter. During my two-hour workshop session I engaged the audience, comprised of tourists, resort staff and other presenters, in an interactive exercise that enabled me to collect data on their opinions and attitudes toward wildlife. This exercise was conducted on three occasions from 2002 to 2004, each time with a group of about 20 people.

The majority of group interviews were recorded on minidisk with a hand held recorder and later transcribed. In the workshop setting the groups were not audio recorded; however, a detailed record of the participants views and ideas were made on large sheets of paper during the session and kept with my own notes as a record of the session.

Group interviews proved to be a particularly valuable technique to use with campers on Fraser Island, where I approached people at their campsite and invited them to take part in the research. Here group sizes were most commonly between two and five, and comprised of either a group of friends or family members who felt more comfortable talking together than being separated from the group for an individual interview. These fall into the category of ‘natural’ or ‘pre-existing’ groups (Bryman 2004:345).

### *3.2.2.2 Presentation of interview data throughout the thesis*

Voices of the people interviewed are sometimes presented as raw data throughout the thesis. Quotes taken from interview transcripts appear indented in the text and italicised (for example, in Chapter Seven). These are followed, in brackets, by a pseudonym (*e.g.*, ‘Len’) to denote the gender of the interviewee, acknowledgement of the stakeholder group the interviewee identifies with (*e.g.*, ‘island resident’), and the month and year the interview took place. Thus, a typical quote in the text from an interview transcript looks like this:

*You get people complaining occasionally about the fact that they can’t access a lot of the island (‘Yvonne’, volunteer on Penguin Island, February 2003).*

### 3.2.3 Literary and Documentary Sources

The documentary research employed in this thesis has two primary facets. It is both an essential part of the investigation and a specific method of investigation. As such, it provides background information for the research project, and is also a source of data in its own right.

The literature collected and collated for the purpose of this research included public documents, archival records, media outputs, personal documents, administrative documents, but mainly formal studies and reports.<sup>9</sup> The documents were accessed through formal, informal and secondary channels, and subject to both exploratory and comparative analysis (Sarantakos 2005).

Data were collected from extensive literature searches in relevant texts, journals, and government publications. This includes material drawn from a compiled database containing approximately 835 newspaper articles and letters to the editor. The *Newstext* database contained *The Australian*, *The Weekend Australian*, *The Courier Mail*, and *The Sunday Mail* from January 1984 to July 2001. Media outputs were also sampled from the web, using Google as a primary search engine (as discussed earlier). This provided up-to-date information on issues reported in the media, such as dingo attacks. Government publications were also sought, and those of particular importance included the Fraser Island Dingo Management Strategy (FIDMS), analysed in Chapter Eight, and the Shoalwater Bay Management Plan (SWMP).

Data collected in these ways were entered into N-Vivo and subjected to the same type of content analysis as material from interviews. In content analysis I was

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<sup>9</sup> Blogs may also provide a useful future data source; however, most of the data for this thesis was collected between 2001 and 2004 when blogs were less common.



looking for both manifest (surface) and latent (underlying) meanings. The categories for coding emerged during both the collection and analysis of the material.<sup>10</sup>

### **3.2.4 Participant Observation**

Participant observation played a very important part in the data collection for this thesis. This technique is concerned with understanding and interpreting meanings and experiences (Cole 2005:64) and, as the label suggests, involves both observing and participating in activities relevant to the topic being studied. Participant observation provides a way of cross-checking data, and assists with validity and reliability. It also facilitates interpretation of comments made by the study participants; that is, it illuminates the situational context not always apparent simply from interview transcripts. It allowed me to collect data on what people do, not just what they say they do, through direct observation. My observations of people's behaviour and actions, both in groups and as individuals, were recorded in notebooks and on audio recordings during periods of fieldwork and are used to augment the data collected by other methods. The unobtrusiveness of this first-hand data collection method encourages naturalness that was important for the purposes of this study.

Participant observation facilitates insights not gained through the use of other methods. For example, while participating in a ranger-guided walk on Fraser Island I observed a father pointing out dingo footprints to his young children and describing them as "puppy prints", a description which appeared to indicate his comparison of

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<sup>10</sup> Content analysis allows valid and replicable inferences to be systematically made from forms of recorded information (Bryman 2008:275), and is growing in popularity as a method in social science (Hall and Valentin 2005:191). For further information on content analysis in tourism research see Hall and Valentin (2005).

wild dingoes to domesticated dogs. Similarly, on Penguin Island I observed three youths leave the boardwalk to enter an area clearly signed as a non-accessible bird sanctuary; the purpose of their actions was to disturb the breeding pelican colony on the island.

### **3.3 Ethics and Confidentiality**

Ethical considerations form part of the subject matter of this thesis; however, they are also relevant to its methods and procedures which is the context in which they are examined here. Because the study involved human participants, ethical clearance was sought, and obtained, from Murdoch University before the research commenced.

As discussed earlier in relation to sampling (3.2.1), people interviewed for the research were purposively chosen. Following my identification of useful people to interview, only those willing to participate voluntarily did so. Informed consent was obtained from each person prior to interviewing with the aim of complete transparency about the research. Consent from each participant was recorded verbally, on tape, after I had explained the purpose of the data collection at the commencement of each interview. Also explained at this stage was the participants' right to choose not to answer all questions and their right to discontinue the interview if they wished. No one opted to discontinue, though some decided not to commit to tape opinions that they then willingly told me when the recording had been completed. This was particularly common on Fraser Island during the first fieldtrip I made (in May 2001) shortly after a widely publicised dingo attack.

Where observations were made, not all people observed may have been fully informed of my research. On Penguin Island, for example, I observed the behaviour

of tourists arriving by ferry and kayaking tours without approaching each person and explaining my research. In these cases the ferry owner and tour operators were aware of my research, and had I interacted directly with any of the individuals observed then I would have explained my purpose. My intention in these observations was not deliberately to be covert, though the increased naturalness of people's behaviours in this context may be desirable. Non-disclosure was a matter of convenience, both to myself and the people I was observing coupled with a desire, as stated earlier, to be as unobtrusive as possible. As none of the people interviewed or observed for this study are identified in it, this poses no significant ethical issues.<sup>11</sup>

The assurance, and procedure, of anonymity was explained to each participant prior to interviewing. Names were not recorded on the tapes, and transcriptions were collated and stored with reference to a code rather than a name. The list of names and codes was stored separately in a locked filing cabinet in my locked University office in accordance with University guidelines thus continuing to ensure confidentiality of comments. Where comments from interviews are quoted directly in the thesis, and in papers published from this research (for example, Burns and Howard 2003), pseudonyms have been used to conceal the identity of the interviewee (as explained in 3.2.2.2). False names, rather than simply codes, are used for the purpose of informing the reader of the interviewees' gender and stakeholder group affiliation, as well as to maintain the feel of 'reality' that attaching a name to a comment gives.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> The issue of informed consent versus covert research is hotly debated in social science ethics. However, in ethnographic research it is generally recognised that ensuring everyone the researcher may come into contact with has the opportunity of informed consent is not always practical (Bryman 2008:121).

<sup>12</sup> The ethical considerations and measures described in this section follow standard ethical procedures and guidelines for undertaking this type of research. For further information on ethics in tourism research see, for example, Ryan (2005).

### **3.4 Data Analysis and Theorisation<sup>13</sup>**

Analysis of the empirical data collected for this thesis is informed by a social constructionist view of discourse analysis. Definitions of discourse analysis are both plentiful and varied in the literature (Phillips and Hardy 2002:3). This section begins with an explanation of how discourse analysis is defined for the purposes of this thesis. Social constructionism is also defined, followed by a description of how nature is socially constructed and the relationship between social constructionism and the environment.

#### **3.4.1 Discourse Analysis**

Discourse analysis “considers the ways that the use of language presents different views of the world and different understandings” (Paltridge 2006:2). Its foundations lie in the study of linguistics where it was first introduced by Zellig Harris (1952) as a way of analysing connected speech and writing. Thus initial studies in discourse analysis were mainly text-orientated, focussing on language at the level of text. A wide range of practices, differing in their epistemological and ontological practices as well as their methodology, are now classified as discourse analysis (Feindt and Oels 2005:163).

This thesis takes a socially orientated view, where discourse analysis is employed to consider what both written and oral forms of communication are doing in the social and cultural settings in which they occur. This is known as a social constructionist view of discourse, because it considers both the ways in which what we say and

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<sup>13</sup> Parts of this section have been previously published in Hytten and Burns (2007a).

write contribute to the construction of certain views of the world (Paltridge 2006:1), and how these views in turn influence what we write and say and do.

This view of language in use is not mutually exclusive of the view of language as text,<sup>14</sup> and its relevance to this thesis lies in its consideration of how people manage interactions and communicate, as well as the ideas and beliefs that they communicate (Paltridge 2006:9). Healy (2005:239) argues against narrowly defining discourse in terms of symbol and meaning, and proposes that it is “more constructively viewed as a practice constitutive of dynamic ‘relational complexes’ involving people, things and their many properties, competences and accomplishments.”

Discourses have the power to produce social realities that we experience as real and solid (Phillips and Hardy 2002:1-2); consequently, my approach is based on the premise that discourse matters. The views of wildlife that are produced by and made real through tourism and management discourses can not be fully understood, or challenged, without reference to the discourses that give them meaning.

### **3.4.2 Social Constructionism**

As explained at the outset of this chapter, this research has a constructivist ontological foundation. Ontologies can be simplified into two (dualistic) camps; the foundationalist and the anti-foundationalist (Marsh and Furlong 2002:21). In simple terms, positivists and realists look for causal relationships and are ontologically foundationalist. They believe that there is a ‘real’ world that exists regardless of our relationship to it (Marsh and Furlong 2002:21) and that any difference in opinion can

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<sup>14</sup> For further information on the contrast between textually oriented discourse analysis and approaches to discourse analysis that have more of a social theoretical orientation see Cameron and Kulick (2003), Fairclough (2001, 2003), and Gillen and Petersen (2005).

be attributed to ignorance or a lack of information (Howes 2005:5). In contrast, constructivists are anti-foundational (Marsh and Furlong 2002:26), believing that the world is constructed and attributing variations in perception to different social contexts (Howes 2005:6).

Some authors (see Mol and Spaargaren 2000, in Howes 2005:7) criticise a social construction ontology in the context of environment and sustainability studies, claiming that a purely anti-foundationalist view of the world may result in the denial of pressing ecological issues.<sup>15,16</sup> This position can also be seen in the work of Beck (1999) who attempts to bridge the foundationalist/anti-foundationalist divide by arguing that real risks exist, but they are given meaning through social construction (Howes 2005:7). An explanation of this has been given by Lupton (1999) who argues that there are weak and strong versions of constructionism. Weak constructivists assume that a real world exists but the interpretation of that world is constructed by social frameworks. By comparison strong constructionists believe that both the ‘real’ world, and its interpreted meanings, is a product of social construction (Lupton 1999). While the foundations of this thesis identify with constructivist ontology, they can be seen to fit into the ‘weak’ constructivist category.

This thesis also uses an interpretivist epistemology, which appears to be a natural epistemological choice within a constructivist ontology (Sarantakos 2005). Interpretive approaches study beliefs, ideas and discourses and are interested in how those beliefs influence actions and institutions (Marsh and Furlong 2002:136). It is

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<sup>15</sup> There is, however, a growing body of literature that successfully uses social constructionism for analysing environmental problems. See, for example, Burningham (1998), Hytten and Burns (2007a), Macnaghten (1993) and Pettenger (2007).

<sup>16</sup> This may be linked to a further common criticism of social constructionist approaches to environmental issues that the analyses they provide are overly theoretical or, as Martell (1994:131) complains, “too sociological” to be of much practical use.

based on the premise that a researcher needs to explore meanings in order to understand human activities (Marsh and Furlong 2002:136).

Within the field of discourse analysis, social constructionism offers a useful ontological approach from which to understand the collected data. This is related to, but not only because of, the fact that:

There is some acknowledgement that the ethnographer's final account of the culture or group being studied is more than just a description – it is a construction. It is not a direct 'reproduction', a literal photograph of the situation. It is, rather, a crafted construction which employs particular writing skills (rhetoric) and which inevitably owes something to the ethnographer's own experiences (Denscombe 1998:69).

Social constructionism is not solely linked to anthropology however. It is a theoretical orientation that has arisen from a variety of disciplines and intellectual traditions, and today influences and informs research in an even wider range of fields (Burningham 1998:537, Gergen 2001:2). A central tenet of social constructionism is that the way we conceptualise components of reality depends on discourses that construct them in conflicting, often contradictory ways. As such, different realities are constantly being defined and redefined by different people in different contexts (Ife 2002:115). Social constructionism therefore requires that a critical stance be adopted towards taken-for-granted ways of understanding. It argues that the ways in which we commonly understand the world, and the categories and concepts we use, are the products of particular cultures and periods of history, and dependent upon prevalent social, political and economic influences (Burr 2003:3).

Discourse is only one of a number of ways interaction occurs and similarly constitutes only one of a number of ways of studying and understanding how interactions occur. This link between discourse and interaction can be traced to the

roots of social constructionism which lie in social interactionism,<sup>17</sup> ethnomethodology,<sup>18</sup> and the works of authors such as Berger and Luckman (1967) and Goffman (1974).

Versions of knowledge are constructed through interactions between people and objects in the course of social life, and the existence and influence of social structures and institutions. These negotiated understandings can take a wide variety of different forms (Hibberd 2005:4). Each different construction brings with it different kinds of actions, sustaining some patterns of social behaviour and excluding others. Constructions of the world are therefore bound by power relations, with implications for what it is permissible for different people to do, and for how they may treat other people and other species (Burr 2003:5). As such, social constructionism challenges various forms of social inequality through analysing the ways in which discourses perpetuate inequitable power relations, including those among people and between people and the environment (Bennett 1996:170).

Social realities are produced and made real through discourses and other forms of social interaction, and social interactions cannot be fully understood without reference to the discourses that give them meaning. A discourse is “an interrelated set of texts, and the practices of their production, dissemination, and reception, that bring ideas, concepts and beliefs into being” (Phillips and Hardy 2002:3-4). These ideas and beliefs in turn become established as knowledge and a powerful framework for understanding and action in social life. Texts may take a variety of

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<sup>17</sup> Symbolic interactionism began as a sub-discipline of sociology with the work of Mead (1934) who suggested that as people we construct our identities through our everyday social interactions with each other (Burr 2003:13).

<sup>18</sup> Ethnomethodology emerged in North America in the 1950s and 1960s as an attempt to understand the process by which people construct social life and make sense of it to themselves and to each other (Burr 2003:13).



forms, including written or spoken words, pictures, symbols or artefacts, and can be seen to be the sites of the emergence of social meaning (Denzin 1995:52).

The way that discourses construct our experience can be examined by ‘deconstructing’ constituent texts and actions, taking them apart and showing how they work to present a particular version of the world. Deconstruction involves the critical analysis of text and action to examine how subjects become constructed through the structures of language and ideology (Derrida 1976; Denzin 1995:52). Deconstruction reveals contradictions within texts and actions, allowing bias towards particular ideologies to be exposed and enabling them to be challenged (Bennett 1996:171). As such, deconstruction can facilitate the critical analysis of a wide range of social issues including environmental concerns.

#### *3.4.2.1 Social construction of nature*

Under the principles of social constructionism, nature, like other concepts humans use to explain the world, is an invention, or cultural artefact.<sup>19</sup> Definitions of nature are continually constructed and reconstructed in political contexts in which they reflect some interests and not others (Mullin 1999:213). Nature is simultaneously constructed in utilitarian, aesthetic, pragmatic and symbolic ways, and knowledge of it can never be independent of relations with it. How society views nature is in part a function of how society has affected nature. Nature and the cultural conceptions of nature develop together; they co-evolve (Dove 1992:246).

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<sup>19</sup> For an examination of key objections raised against a discursive concept of nature see Dingler (2005) who addresses the objection of solipsism (that a discursive account implies a rejection of the material existence of nature), relativism (that it is impossible to choose between adequate and inadequate constructions of nature), and idealism (that a discourse would actually create what it constructs).

‘Nature’ and ‘natural’ are not just used in a descriptive sense, but also to express, justify or establish particular values or judgements, courses of action and reaction, policy prescriptions and ways of thinking; thus the terms carry with them a host of different values (Barry 1999:12). The oppositional binaries of culture-nature and human-animal, for example, which will be explored throughout this thesis, are naturalised in dominant discourses and do not exist in a power-neutral situation. Both ‘sides’ of the opposition do not have equal access to setting the terms of reference; the side that forms, asserts and imposes the representation is empowered (Suchet 2002:143). By externalising nature and obscuring its cultural roots, people are able to dominate nature by removing it from ethical consideration (Gill 1999:58). The argument is not that particular knowledges are inferior to others, but rather to expose the context and realisation of power relationships,<sup>20</sup> through examining the way concepts are situated within discourses and steeped in assumptions (Suchet 2002:150).

The challenge is to examine the implications of epistemological relativity for the ‘objective’ practices of scientists engaging with nature and related concepts (Ellen 1996:2). The matter is an urgent and crucial one where science impinges on policy. It is not only science which works with its own and often conflicting definitions of nature; it is also true of states, bureaucracies and their agencies, which often have to navigate the interface between scientific concepts and political pressures. It is important to examine the extent to which official definitions of nature legitimate those of the morally and politically powerful and the degree to which they combine the constructions of different constituencies. Particular attention must be paid to the

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<sup>20</sup> For a discussion on post-modern discourse theory and the Foucaultian notion of nature as a product of power relations, where the constellations of power determine the construction of nature, see Dingler (2005).

ambiguities and inconsistencies within discourses, in order to determine how particular definitions of nature and aspects of nature, such as wilderness and wildlife, serve the interests of particular groups, and disempower other groups, other species and other aspects of the natural environment (Ellen 1996:28, Dwyer 1996:161, Mullin 1999:212). This is discussed further in Chapter Five when examining the various stakeholder groups and individuals who constitute the wildlife tourism community.

#### *3.4.2.2 Social constructionism and the environment*

A social constructionist perspective on the management of environmental issues has several advantages over other theoretical approaches (Hannigan 1995:30). Environmental debates reflect not just an absence of certainty, but also the existence of contradictory certainties: severely divergent and sometimes irreconcilable sets of convictions, both about environmental problems and the available solutions (Moulton and Sanderson 1999:4, Thompson 1991:243). Environmental problems do not materialise by themselves; rather they are constructed by individuals or organisations that define some conditions as problematic.<sup>21</sup> So, too, “the articulation of an environmental problem shapes if and how the problem is dealt with” (Feindt and Oels 2005:162). In this context, the aim of social constructionism is to understand why certain conditions come to be perceived in this way, how those who register this claim command political attention, and how and why particular

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<sup>21</sup> Considering environmental issues as socially constructed does not mean they are not real. Discursive approaches have been criticised for appearing to deny the reality and severity of environmental problems (Proctor 1998, Soule and Lease 1995). However, the aim is not to assess factuality but rather to highlight that how environmental issues came to be seen and treated as problematic is an inherently social process (Birmingham 1998:559-560).

understandings of environmental problems at some point gain dominance while others are discredited (Hannigan 1995:4).

“The contribution of a constructionist approach to studies of the environment is its analysis of the varied meanings of nature created by social groups” (Goedeke and Herda-Rapp 2005:3). The approach allows a theoretical, yet empirically grounded, perspective to emerge (p3) and also has the “potential for helping us to better understand cultural relationships within the natural world” (p8).<sup>22, 23</sup>

Social constructionism focuses on the social, political and cultural processes by which environmental conditions are defined as being unacceptably risky and subsequently actionable (Hajer 1995:44). It asserts that social responses to problems do not necessarily correspond to actual conditions, but to a considerable extent, reflect the political nature of agenda setting (Hannigan 1995:30). It is therefore particularly important to deconstruct controversial environmental management policies and practices, as will be done in this thesis in the context of wildlife tourism.

Constructivism allows the researcher to see that there are alternative ways of thinking and being in the world. This requires that a critical position is taken towards dominant ways of understanding reality (Latour 2004). It is a challenge to positivism’s reliance on objective and unbiased ‘fact’. Instead, it is maintained that the way we understand and interpret the world is a product of our histories and cultures and it is dependent on social, political and economic influences (Dale 2001). Therefore, social constructionism is a valuable analytical tool for looking at

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<sup>22</sup> *Imagined Country* (Short 2005) is an example of a text in which the environment is viewed as a social construct, defined, interpreted and reproduced by culture and ideology.

<sup>23</sup> Like all theories, social constructionism is not without its critics. For a discussion on criticisms of the theory and arguments refuting them, see Goedeke and Herda-Rapp (2005:8), and Ingold (1992).

dominant management paradigms and different constructions of nature, wildlife and human-wildlife interactions.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

Framed within an interpretivist and social constructionist paradigm, this study employed a combination of research strategies and methods to gather primary and secondary forms of data at both fieldwork locations and on the theme of wildlife tourism. As part of an ethnographic approach to case study research, these methods included purposive sampling, individual and group interviews, literature and documentary sources, and participant observation. The application of these strategies and methods has been described throughout this chapter. The chapter also included a section on data analysis and theorisation in which the relevance and utilisation of discourse analysis and social constructionism to the study were discussed. Armed with this knowledge of the thesis methodology we can proceed to Section Two to explore the literature and theoretical concepts that will further inform the final analysis.

## SECTION TWO:

# UNDERSTANDING THE LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL CONCEPTS

The literature and theoretical concepts relevant to this thesis are discussed in this second section. Chapter Four explores the three main disciplines (anthropology, tourism and environment) brought together to provide an interdisciplinary approach to the thesis topic. Chapter Five then focuses on the wildlife tourism community, defining who they are and how they have been treated in the literature. The final chapter, Six, investigates conservation literature in the light of wildlife tourism and the relationship between this and the dichotomy often drawn between nature and culture.



## SECTION TWO: UNDERSTANDING THE LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL CONCEPTS

### CHAPTER FOUR

# **Anthropology, Tourism and the Environment**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

As tourism continues to expand, not just in terms of numbers of arrivals, but also in the types and forms that the phenomenon assumes, its impacts and global importance increase. Concurrently, the potential for the anthropological study of tourism grows. Similarly, as global concern appears to mount over the state of our planet's environment, an increasing plethora of disciplines find themselves drawn into the commentary. Anthropology is no novice to musing about the relations between people and the environment. In recent years, however, these studies have taken on a different focus and a new importance.

This chapter discusses the relationship between anthropology and tourism, and anthropology and environmental science. The first part of the chapter concentrates



on anthropology and tourism, commencing with an overview of the historical context of the relationship between the two. How, and why, these two areas of study are relevant to each other is investigated, highlighting some of the forms of involvement of anthropologists and sociologists with tourism and the types of research that have been undertaken. This leads to the argument that contemporary tourism, in the forms of sustainable tourism, ecotourism and wildlife tourism, poses new theoretical challenges for anthropological research. However, these are challenges that can and should be met by the discipline.

As discussed in Chapter One, a universally accepted definition of tourism is hard to come by. Tourism is perhaps best seen as a multi-compartmentalised “modern industry”<sup>1</sup> (Bramwell and Lane 2000a:1) taking many shapes and forms, a vision that encompasses its breadth and illusive nature of definition. Attempts to explain tourism in the 1990s tended towards a 'systems approach' which recognises the complexity of tourism, and endeavours to position it within a holistic framework (P. Burns 1999,<sup>2</sup> P. Burns and Holden 1995, Leiper 1995, Martin and Weaver 2000, Sofield 1999). The advantage of such an approach is that tourism is not automatically seen in isolation from its political, natural, economic or social environments. Emphasising the interconnectedness between one part of a system and another encourages multidisciplinary thinking which, given the complexity of tourism, is essential if we are to deepen our understanding of it (P. Burns 1999:29). It also enables interdisciplinary

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<sup>1</sup> Some authors dispute this. According to de Kadt (1979:x), for example, there is no such thing as a tourist industry. His assertion is based on the fact that tourists are involved in a wide range of industries, not just one. Leiper (2008:237) argues the case for plural “tourism industries”, and Middleton (1998) similarly proposes that tourism is better understood as a total market than as a single industry. Despite these concerns, most of the recent literature acknowledges the existence of a tourism industry therefore it is assumed throughout this thesis that such a term can be used meaningfully.

<sup>2</sup> To avoid confusion between the authors Georgette Leah Burns and Peter Burns, who are both cited throughout this thesis, references to works by Peter Burns are acknowledged as ‘P. Burns’).

thinking which offers alternatives, and depth, to traditional ways of understanding. Within this systems approach to tourism, anthropology and environmental science can find both individual niches and collaborative opportunities not previously apparent.

Before exploring the existence of an ‘Anthropology of the Environment’ in Australia this chapter will attempt to define the area and give a brief overview of its history. It will be argued that anthropologists already engage in environmental issues, and environmental scientists employ anthropological methods and techniques, but this collaboration and interdisciplinarity lacks structure and formal recognition. An inescapable challenge of finding solutions to environmental problems demands answering questions about human interactions with the environment and requires the embracing of interdisciplinary approaches. Without the insights of anthropology into, for example, the social and cultural constructs of universal environmental tenets, such as conservation, environmental science in Australia remains impoverished. Thus, opportunities for, and challenges associated with, strengthening the role of anthropology in environmental discourse will be addressed. The chapter then turns to a discussion of the relationships between people and animals, and in particular anthropology and wildlife. Conclusions are drawn regarding the current state of environmental anthropology in Australia, and the relevance of studying wildlife tourism.

## 4.1 An Anthropology of Tourism<sup>3</sup>

Tourism is one of the world's largest industries and, as such, has profound and multi-faceted importance in contemporary settings (Tisdell 2000). As noted by Nash (1995:179), any human subject of such magnitude cries out for anthropological analysis. Despite its widespread global influence and constant expansion, however, the phenomenon of tourism has, until quite recently, rarely occupied a central focus in anthropological research and writing. Tourism itself is, of course, by no means a new phenomenon. It has long been analysed by economic and marketing scholars, its history of study in these disciplines arising because tourism was primarily seen as an economic rather than social activity.

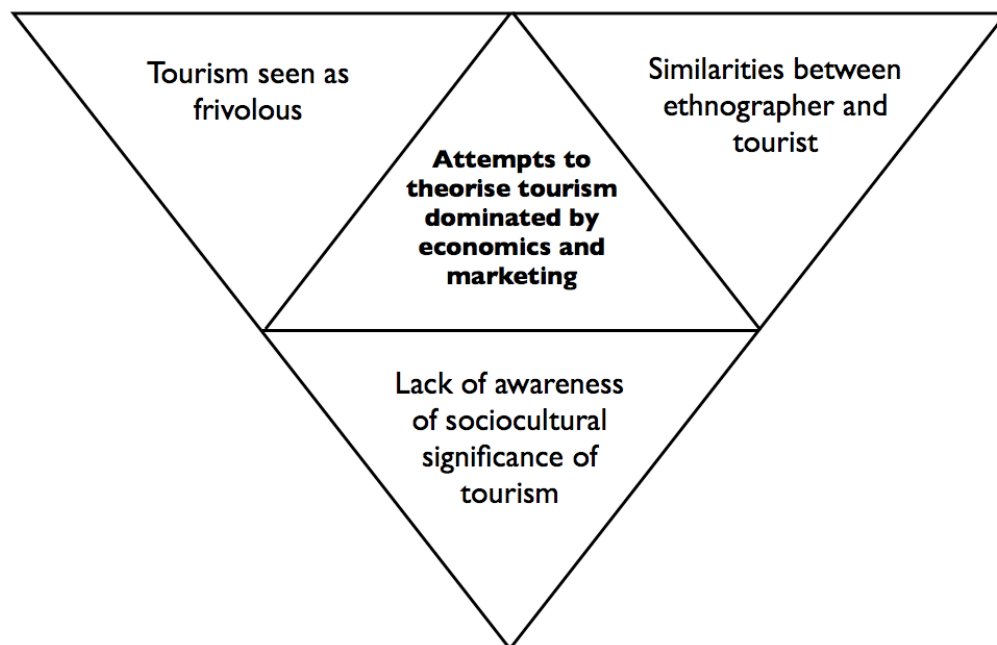


Figure 4.1: An Avoidance Relationship (adapted from Burns 1999:73, after Nash 1981).

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<sup>3</sup> Parts of this chapter have been previously published in Burns (2004).

There are several possible reasons for anthropologists' reluctance to involve themselves with tourism (see Figure 4.1). Firstly, tourism has been seen as an area of study to be avoided by serious scholars, a belief that remains prevalent. The study of tourism was deemed by anthropologists to be something frivolous, something not worthy of academic pursuit (Nash 2007, van den Berge 1994:3-4). Secondly, avoidance of the study of tourism stems from the possible similarities between the journey of the tourist and the study of the anthropologist: "Anthropologists and tourists seem to have a lot in common" (Stronza 2001:261). Redfoot (1984) even proposes the anthropologist as a particular type of tourist. The anthropologist as fieldworker, and ethnographer, did not want to be identified with tourists.<sup>4</sup> If the similarity was recognised, then studying tourism became akin to studying oneself; a self-reflexive stance from which anthropology traditionally shied away.<sup>5</sup>

A third reason relates to the widespread lack of awareness of the sociocultural significance of tourism. Tourism was thought to be about economics<sup>6</sup> and tourists, not about the local community or hosts (who have long been the focus of anthropology). Tourism was viewed as a Western phenomenon, something that happened in industrialised or large-scale societies, and therefore was not relevant to studies of indigenous peoples or small-scale societies. For these reasons, the study

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<sup>4</sup> This desire by anthropologists to distance themselves as much as possible from tourists becomes complicated by the fact that members of the communities anthropologists study, and tourists visit, might not separate the two into distinct categories. For example, in a Fijian village where I lived and studied (Burns 1993, 1994, 1996, 2003), tourists regularly visited the village as part of a package tour. For the family with whom I stayed, and those with whom the tourists stayed, there is little operational difference in dealing with these outsiders to the community. The same applied to Peace Corps workers who occasionally stayed in the same village. While each of the outsiders was keen to distinguish between themselves and the others, to both the host community and anthropological subject the differences were unperceivable and irrelevant.

<sup>5</sup> Anthropology became more accepting of self-reflexivity once postmodernism began to inform its theoretical approaches in the mid-1980s, as can be seen in the ethnographic film work of O'Rourke (see, for example, 1984, 1987, 1991, 2000).

<sup>6</sup> Brown and Jafari (1990:79), for example, wrote about the prevailing view, dominant until at least the mid-1980s, of tourism as an almost exclusively economic activity.

of tourism was considered more suitable for economists, geographers, and sociologists than anthropologists.

For a long time then, tourism was rarely mentioned in anthropological literature, such as ethnographies, and when mentioned it was most commonly noted as incidental to the major topic of discussion.<sup>7</sup> For example, it may appear appended to sections on Western impacts on indigenous people, as another form of Western contact following colonisation or as an emerging form of trade,<sup>8</sup> but was rarely recognised as a separate entity encompassing a discourse of its own.

Thankfully this situation has changed. The first anthropological study of tourism was undertaken by Nunez in 1963 and the 1970s then became a decade for the brave: those who were willing to acknowledge that tourism was globally and locally important enough not to be overlooked any longer, and to be tackled seriously by anthropology. Although these authors were few in number,<sup>9</sup> this core group of researchers recognised that the study of tourism was appropriate for anthropology and was something that could be confidently embraced without compromising the credibility of the discipline.

The rise of the anthropological study of tourism can be traced through key journals in both the fields of anthropology and tourism, where a rapid increase in the number of publications can be seen during the 1980s (Burns 2004a). However, despite some rigorous academic debates on the anthropology of tourism appearing in the literature

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<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Hilliard (1968), Japanangka and Nathan (1983:41), and Wax (1971:69).

<sup>8</sup> For example, Weiner (1976) initially professed that she 'wanted to study the wood carvings fashioned by Kiriwina men in response to the growing tourist trade' (p.3), yet such tourism is rarely mentioned in her ethnography (1976:32, 79, 129).

<sup>9</sup> Some key authors on the anthropology of tourism in the 1970s include: Aspelin (1977), Cohen (1972, 1973, 1974, 1979a, 1979b), Graburn (1976), Greenwood (1976), Nash (1978), Pi-Sunyer (1977), Pizam (1978), Reiter (1977), and Smith (1976, 1977a, 1977b, 1978).

by the late 1980s, Graburn, who had been publishing in the field for 10 years, described the study of tourism as “an entirely suitable, albeit neglected, topic for anthropologists” (1988:64).<sup>10</sup> This view has been vindicated by a gradually growing corpus of anthropological studies of tourism.

From its beginnings tourism has been strongly associated with notions of development. Anthropologists have contributed to the tourism literature in discussions on the many theories surrounding the issue of development, given that the tourism industry has been (and in many cases continues to be) seen as vital for the development of small-scale, underdeveloped or 'less developed' (Harrison 1992) societies.<sup>11</sup>

Development remains an important issue in tourism today, where it is still strongly connected with notions of economic growth (see, for example, Briedenhann and Wickens 2004, and Oh 2005). Other development topics, however, have taken on increased importance. Beeton (2006), for example, writes about developing communities through tourism,<sup>12</sup> and Mowforth and Munt (2008) explore whether socioculturally responsible forms of tourism provide a sensitive answer to the call for development.

In the early 1990s, Lanfant (1993:76) and Dann and Cohen (1991) claimed that tourism research had been, and continued to be, “undertaken in a fragmented and

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<sup>10</sup> For further writings on the validation of tourism as an appropriate field of anthropological and sociological study see, for example, Ahmed and Shore (1995), Burns (1996, 2004a), P. Burns, (1999), Cohen (1972, 1979a, 2007), Crick (1988), Dumont (1984), Graburn (1980, 1983, 2007), Graburn and Jafari (1991), Jafari (2007), Lanfant (1993, 2007), MacCannell (2007), Nash (1978, 1981, 1995, 1996a, 2007), Smith (2007) and Sofield (2000).

<sup>11</sup> Examples of these authors include Britton (1980a, 1980b, 1981, 1982a, 1982a, 1983), Harrison (1992), Hoivik and Heilberg (1980), Lee (1988), and Plange (1989).

<sup>12</sup> This topic has been popular amongst many authors. See, for example, Briedenhann and Wickens (2004), Dahles (2003), Fuller, Buultjens and Howard (2006), Hall and Richards (2003), and Jopp (1996).

unsatisfactory fashion”. The minimal anthropological commitment to this field no doubt contributed to this fragmentation, but the potential existed to rectify this oversight. In early studies of tourism anthropologists only focussed on part of the picture, which lies in opposition to the fundamental principles of this discipline that promotes itself as having a holistic framework for analysis.

In 1993, Przeclawski proposed an interdisciplinary approach to the study of tourism in which issues can be examined from different viewpoints. This approach stressed that tourism is a very complex phenomenon, encompassing issues that are:

- economic (to do with supply and demand, business, and markets),
  - psychological (such as need and motivation),
  - social (roles, contacts, and ties),
  - and cultural (where it can transmit knowledge, and be a factor in change)
- (1993:11).

Because of this complexity, an integrative, interdisciplinary approach seemed appropriate (and necessary) to provide a holistic view of tourism. It is from these kinds of ideas that the systems approach developed (Figure 4.2).

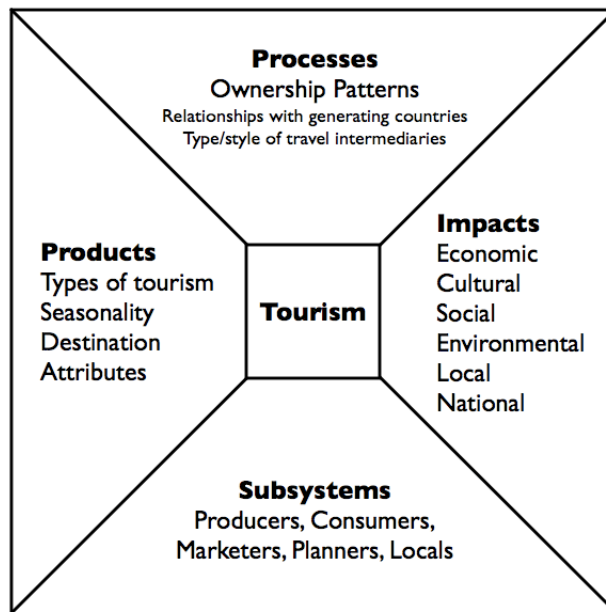


Figure 4.2: Tourism as a System (adapted from Burns 1999:28, after Burns and Holden 1995).

The systems approach to tourism is based upon general systems theory, pioneered by biologist Ludwug von Bertalanffy in 1973 (Mill and Morrison 2006:3), and owes its early descriptions to Gunn (1994) and Leiper (1990). Gunn’s approach was to describe the functioning of the tourism system while Leiper wrote about its five elements. The idea of a system for tourism was devised to get away from the notion of it as simply a one-dimensional industry. Instead, the systems approach captures the “big picture”, the open system nature of tourism, its complexity, variety and competitiveness, and the fact that it is ever-changing (Mill and Morrison 2006:4). This is illustrated in Figure 4.2, which depicts the multi-dimensional aspects of tourism under the heading of processes, products, impacts and subsystems.<sup>13</sup>

In anthropological literature today, few texts are dedicated entirely to the anthropology of tourism (some exceptions include P. Burns 1999, Chambers 2000,

<sup>13</sup> The evolution of scientific thought on tourism that led to this holistic treatment of tourism is traced by Jafari (2001) through four platforms; advocacy, cautionary, adaptancy, and knowledge-based.



Nash 1996a, 2007, Smith and Brent 2001, and Yamashita 2003), though authors of ethnographies sometimes include a section on tourism (much the same as they used to include sections on colonialism and its effects). However, ethnographers increasingly find that tourism is an important part of the lives of the people with whom they work (Burns 1996).<sup>14</sup>

Today, there are many types of tourism, and they are increasing. As this happens, greater understanding of the tourism industry, from all angles, is needed and it becomes apparent that different disciplines have specialised expertise that can be applied to different areas of the tourism system. Despite tourism's multidisciplinary foundation, true interdisciplinarity of this field is less evident (Fennell 2006:332). Fennell (2006:327) argues that the inherent complexity of tourism issues means "tourism research, more than ever, needs to be interdisciplinary in its focus." As a need for a sustainable tourism industry is increasingly recognised, areas in which the application of anthropological theories may be relevant widen. Ecotourism and wildlife tourism are areas of study which anthropology traditionally avoided; however, as I will demonstrate, they could be especially pertinent to the renewal and continuation of the discipline.

## **4.2 Sustainable Tourism**

Many different definitions of sustainable tourism have been developed over the last decade. Most tend to assume that all tourists are responsible for respecting and conserving a location's economic, environmental and sociocultural balances.

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<sup>14</sup> Pierre van den Berghe, for example, first visited the Mexican town of San Cristobel in 1959 and wrote about inter-ethnic relations in the region (1961, 1977, 1980, 1995, 2001, 2007). However, between visits in 1977 and 1987 he found that San Cristobel had moved from experiencing a small number of backpackers to a daily flow of hundreds of tourists of many varied types. This had an obvious impact on his studies and his resultant book, *The Quest for the Other* (1994), was the first book length study of ethnic tourism.

McCool and Moisey (2001:4), for example, define sustainable tourism as “a kinder, gentler form of tourism that is generally small in scale, sensitive to cultural and environmental impact and respects the involvement of local people with policy decisions.” While gentleness, sensitivity and respect are certainly desirable elements of sustainable tourism, and possibly all tourism, this definition does not really focus on the element of sustainability.

Taking a more developmental approach, the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) defines sustainable tourism “as a model form of economic development that is designed to:

- improve the quality of life in the host community
- provide a high quality of experience for the visitors, and
- maintain the quality of the environment on which both the host community and the visitor depend” (cited in Ryan 2002:22).

In this definition, sustainability is confined to environmental quality.

David Weaver (1998, 2001a, 2001b, 2006, 2008), a long-time author of tourism texts, reminds us that at its most basic, sustainable tourism may be regarded as the application of the sustainable development idea to the tourism sector. Sustainable tourism then is “tourism development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs ... tourism that wisely uses and conserves resources in order to maintain their long-term viability” (Weaver 2006:10).<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> For other recent texts on sustainable tourism see, for example, Edgell (2006), Herremans (2006), Mowforth and Munt (2008), and Murphy and Price (2005).

The role of anthropology in sustainable tourism is illuminated by this simple definition. To achieve this goal of meeting needs, the needs of both present and future generations must be understood. Needs may be identified at both individual and group levels, but are frequently ascribed and best understood at the level of culture and it is also here that they are most likely to be achieved. As discussed, anthropology is long rehearsed in the study of both development and culture, and thus is perfectly poised to assist in these areas of understanding. Although Holden (2005:138) claims that anthropology is only about culture and therefore can only contribute to this area of tourism, it can do more than simply look at impacts on tourists or on tourism destinations. Certainly the use of ethnography as methodology and focus on culture gives anthropologists “special preoccupations and points of view” which shape their understanding of tourism (Holden 2005:138), but this does not have to be a restriction. Anthropology is a valuable contributor to tourism studies in its own right, but it can do more than just stand alone however in its engagement with tourism. As argued earlier, tourism is essentially an interdisciplinary subject and sustainability is an integrative term (Moore *et al.* 2007). Consequently, sustainable tourism is best understood from an interdisciplinary approach. As I will demonstrate, anthropology can work best as part of an interdisciplinary collective, adding its particular expertise to the growing body of literature understanding contemporary tourism.

The concept of sustainability in tourism came into vogue as an alternative to mainstream tourism, and as part of a search for development which is “ecologically

sound and respectful of the needs of all involved” (Nash 1996a:119).<sup>16</sup> It was also linked to discussions about a ‘triple bottom line’, which articulate a need for development to have positive outcomes economically, socially and environmentally. The search for sustainability is especially important for countries that are economically dependent on tourism, and therefore need it to continue. Despite concepts of sustainable development and sustainable tourism being highly publicised and highly contested, politically and ethically (Macbeth 2005:965, 967),<sup>17</sup> de Kadt (1992:56) argues that making sustainability the focus of alternative development may be the most productive way to move forward in terms of tourism policies. A problem with this ideal is the reality that development tends to address economic conditions before social or environmental ones (Nash 1996a:121) and, as Davison (2001) attests, there is no true sustainability unless viable material lives intersect with moral lives. Consequently, Macbeth (2005:980) sees sustainable tourism as more than simply an adaptive paradigm (Hunter 1997), and argues that for tourism to be truly sustainable it must adopt an ethical stance.<sup>18</sup>

The idea of environmental conservation through tourism must not and can not be divorced from wider development issues and a consideration of environmental ethics. Therefore, to satisfy the multitude of interests involved now and in the

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<sup>16</sup> For information on the history of the concept of sustainable development, and the connection between tourism and sustainable development, see Nash (1996a:120-131) and Murphy and Price (2005).

<sup>17</sup> Macbeth (2005:967-968) argues that the concept of sustainability is of limited value until it moves beyond its inherent anthropomorphic, and often ethnocentric, ethic.

<sup>18</sup> See also Cheney and Weston (1999) and Holden (2003).

future, tourism needs to be sustainable. Ecotourism is one form of tourism that (ideally) attempts to be sustainable.<sup>19</sup>

### 4.3 Ecotourism

There are many definitions of ecotourism (Donohoe and Needham 2006:192) and although most echo similar sentiments (see, for example, Cater 1994, Fennell 2003:19-27, West and Carrier 2004:483, and Western 1993), it is frequently defined differently by different people according to their own needs, and consequently remains “a contested term” (Cater 2007:63).<sup>20</sup> In general, ecotourism is used to describe tourism that is nature based, sustainably orientated, conservation supporting, and environmentally educated (Buckley 1994:661, Fennell 2006:184, 294), Newsome *et al.* 2002).<sup>21</sup> It is seen as a type of alternative tourism (Smith and Eadington 1992), as opposed to mass tourism (Boissevain 1996, Fennell 2003, Weaver 2001a, 2001b, 2008), which aims to preserve the integrity of both the social and physical environment.<sup>22</sup> Ideally then, ecotourism has attributes of sociocultural and ecological integrity as well as responsibility and sustainability, which is why Weaver (2006:191) describes it as the conscience of sustainable tourism.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Many authors however (for example, West and Carrier 2004) argue that ecotourism is deeply problematic as a key to sustainable development. Indeed, Olwig (2004:494) notes that ecotourism is characterised by “a good deal of idealism.” For a recent commentary on ecotourism and sustainability see Hill and Gale eds (in press).

<sup>20</sup> For comprehensive overviews of ecotourism definitions see, for example, Bjork (2000, 2007), Blamey (1997), Fennell (2001, 2003, 2007), Page and Dowling (2002), Sirakaya *et al.* (1999).

<sup>21</sup> Too often ecotourism is used as a label for anything that links tourism with nature (Russell 2007:226). What (should) separate ecotourism from nature based tourism are the characteristics of sustainable management, support for conservation and a commitment to environmental education.

<sup>22</sup> For further information on the relationship between ecotourism and other forms of tourism see Fennell (2003, 2007) and Weaver (2001a, 2001b, 2008).

<sup>23</sup> Weaver (2006, 2008) views non-consumption as an essential aspect of ecotourism. Fennell (2008:32), however, writes about ‘consumptive forms of ecotourism’, thus demonstrating a further debate in defining criteria relevant to the term.

Ecotourism is a relatively young field. The first use of the word is often attributed to Romeril (1985) and the first formal definition to Ceballos-Lascurian (1987:13). Ecotourism grew out of the trend toward concerns over environmental impacts of development, which sparked terms such as ‘sustainable tourism’, ‘green tourism’, ‘nature tourism’ and ‘ecotourism’. The 1990s then became the decade of ecotourism, as the travel industry became sensitised to mounting global concerns about the social and environmental costs of too much tourism.<sup>24</sup>

There has been much criticism of ‘ecotourism’, both as a concept and as a labelling process. The term has been applied widely (Wright 1993) and frequent contradictions between its rhetoric and practice (Fennell 2006:294, West and Carrier 2004:486) ensure that it not only faces a crisis of credibility (Fennell and Weaver 2005:373) but has to some degree become meaningless (Chirgwin and Hughes 1997). Recent literature in social anthropology has accused ecotourism as being a “bubble” (Carrier and Mcleod 2005) that has become an umbrella term for many “irresponsible” tourism practices (Russell and Wallace 2004). Consequently many authors (such as Kruger 2005, West and Carrier 2004) are understandably sceptical about its worth. However, despite criticism,<sup>25</sup> the popularity of ecotourism survived the 1990s, with the UN declaring 2002 the International Year of Ecotourism,<sup>26</sup> and ecotourism becoming one of the fastest growing sectors of the tourism industry (West and Carrier 2004:483).

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<sup>24</sup> For information on the growth and evolution of ecotourism, see Beaumont (1998), Bjork (2007), Clarke (1997), Diamantis (1999), Fennell (2002), Higham (2007), Hvenegaard (1994:25) and OECD (1980).

<sup>25</sup> For recent anthropological critiques of ecotourism see, for example, Carrier and Mcleod (2005), Russell and Wallace (2004).

<sup>26</sup> For a discussion of this declaration and its ramifications, see Higham (2007:9-14).

Supporters of ecotourism see it as a form of nature-based tourism that, if properly planned, can meet some of the the objections to conventional large-scale tourism. For many, ecotourism has come to denote forms of tourism that focus on the natural world but do not have significantly adverse effects on it. Fennell (2003:20) detects a mounting consensus in the literature that describes ecotourism as part of a broader nature based tourism (Figure 4.3). This is evidenced in the discussion by Goodwin (1996) who describes nature tourism as all forms of tourism which use natural resources (p287) versus ecotourism as “low impact nature tourism” (p288).

The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) aims to promote “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people” ([www.ecotourism.org](http://www.ecotourism.org)). If well-being of local people is a primary element, then this clearly sets the stage for the entrance of anthropology which shares such a goal. This definition is succinct and, according to TIES, compliance with it indicates that those who implement and participate in ecotourism activities should adhere to a set of principles that include minimising impact as well as providing positive experiences for both visitors and hosts, direct financial benefits for conservation, and financial benefits and empowerment for local people.

TIES is an international organisation and Australia has its own ecotourism body, Ecotourism Australia (EA), which has promulgated the following definition of ecotourism and believes true ecotourism is that which complies with the core criteria stated in its Eco Certification Program.<sup>27</sup>

Ecotourism is ecologically sustainable tourism with a primary focus on experiencing natural areas that fosters environmental and cultural

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<sup>27</sup> Details of the certification program can be found at [www.ecotourism.org.au/eco\\_certification.asp](http://www.ecotourism.org.au/eco_certification.asp).

understanding, appreciation and conservation (Ecotourism Australia 2007).

It is not my intention here to dwell on the debates about the merits or pitfalls of ecotourism. This has been done adequately by others; for example, Page and Dowling (2002), Weaver (1998, 2001a, 2001b, 2008). There remains a tendency to see ecotourism as “the world’s greenest form of tourism” (Fennell 2006:184), and thus preferred over all other forms. Clearly ecotourism has much potential, but on its own will not save disappearing ecosystems and other environmental problems (Dimanche and Smith 1996). There is much debate over the value of ecotourism from an ecological perspective.<sup>28</sup> An environmental impact from tourism is inevitable – there will be consequences regardless of how gentle they are. How then can ecotourism ever be a positive thing? The creation of national parks and wildlife reserves primarily for tourism can serve the dual function of protecting ecologically sensitive areas and supporting biodiversity. However, in the past, these methods of preservation have often displaced local people from lands upon which they lived, a process which brought about its own set of ecological problems.<sup>29</sup> Missing from the literature is depth in the debate over the professed sociocultural values (Macbeth 2005) of ecotourism; an area to which anthropology could, and should, contribute.

For example, the claim that ecotourism can, and does, involve indigenous people and may offer greater opportunities for their participation than other forms of tourism demands anthropological analysis. Ecotourism has the potential to empower hosts,

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<sup>28</sup> Authors who agree that ecotourism has the potential to offer “unique opportunities for integrating rural development, tourism, resource management, and protected area management” (Hvenegaard 1994:24), believe it may be the most viable and effective means to limit the damage being caused by the world’s constantly expanding tourism industry. However, Nash (1996a:132), for example, argues that ecotourism provides no pancea for the problems caused by other forms of tourism.

<sup>29</sup> Taylor (1990), for example, writes about the problems of managing weeds species in Lassen Volcanic Park and the role of pre-European fire regimes.



but it also has the potential to continue to exploit and denigrate them and their culture. Attempts at understanding hosts are often made from an etic perspective, and a more emic approach should be pursued. There is a need to understand the role indigenous people want and take in ecotourism, if for no other reason than because this can influence tourism's successes and failures (Stronza 2001:270). A holistic anthropological approach can provide understanding of the hosts, as well as the tourists and the tourism operators.

The involvement, and acceptance, of anthropology in the field of ecotourism should not be difficult to achieve. Because ecotourism research focuses on the interface between humans and nature and concerns regarding sustainability it necessarily draws on a number of disciplines from the social and natural sciences (Moore *et al.* 2007) and, as such, is inherently interdisciplinary.<sup>30</sup> West and Carrier (2004:484) blame the newness of ecotourism, and the fact that it is both an industry and an object of academic study, for the work on it to date being fragmented and “offering a number of ways in which it can be approached.” Perhaps they are noting a multidisciplinary, rather than interdisciplinary, history of academic engagement with the topic.

Declaring that “we should not throw the baby of ecotourism out with the bathwater of irresponsible ecotourism practice,” Russell (2007:242) recognises that there is real and potential value in some forms of ecotourism (p226), and there has been anthropological work on ecotourism (for example, Bandy 1996, Belsky 1999, Chaplin 1990, Muhlhausler and Peace 2001, Peace 2005a, Vivanco 2001, West and Carrier 2004, and Young 1999). However, the topic has not yet generated enough

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<sup>30</sup> For further discussion on interdisciplinarity see section 4.5.1.

interest to develop into a coherent discipline. Russell (2007) argues that we need to move beyond what we have been doing, what he calls “an anthropology of ecotourism”, towards a more applied and actively engaged “anthropology for ecotourism” (p231).

#### **4.3.1 Ecotourists**

Any examination of ecotourism is incomplete without an understanding of who ecotourists are, and there have been numerous attempts to profile the typical characteristics of them. Those studying ecotourists have explored their sociodemographic and travel characteristics, and what they seek from a tourism experience (Kerstetter, Hou and Lin 2004:491). Kusler (1991), for example, attempts to classify ecotourists on the basis of experience, setting and group dynamics, while Lindberg (1991) identifies four groups based on dedication and time. Weaver (2001a, 2001b) differentiates between ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ ecotourists, and offers a model of ‘comprehensive’ versus ‘minimalist’ ideal types (Weaver 2005). Eagles and Cascagnette (1995:22) suggest ecotourists “travel with the intent of observing, experiencing and learning about nature”. This breadth reminds us that, like ecotourism, ecotourists are difficult to define because their motivations often overlap with other types of tourists (Wight 1996). The models posed by these, and other, authors are useful conceptual tools to help us think about ecotourists; however, there is a need to be aware of the false homogeneity they can portray and acknowledge the intragroup differences that may exist.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> For more information on ecotourists see, for example, Fennell (2003, 2007)

## 4.4 Wildlife Tourism and Wildlife Tourists

Who visits wildlife tourism settings? Who are wildlife tourists? Obviously a wide range of people visit such settings, just as there are a wide range of stakeholders with both shared and differential interests in wildlife tourism enterprises (see Chapter Five). And, all who visit the settings might not classify themselves as wildlife tourists. Newsome, Moore and Dowling (2002:21) describe wildlife tourists as those who “seek an experience that will enable them to explore ... a new ecosystem and its inhabitants.” Just as there are many different kinds of wildlife tourism ventures there are many types of wildlife tourists.

Wildlife tourism was defined in Chapter One as sub-set of nature-based tourism<sup>32</sup> where the nature is wildlife, and wildlife tourists will be discussed further in following chapters. Goodwin (1996:288) suggests that ecotourism is the part of nature-based tourism that has a low impact and contributes to the conservation of species and habitats. In light of these definitions, the relationship between nature-based tourism, ecotourism and wildlife tourism might be represented schematically as shown in Figure 4.3.

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<sup>32</sup> For diagrammatic representations of this sub-set see, for example, Newsome, Dowling and Moore (2005:19), Reynolds and Braithwaite (2001:32).

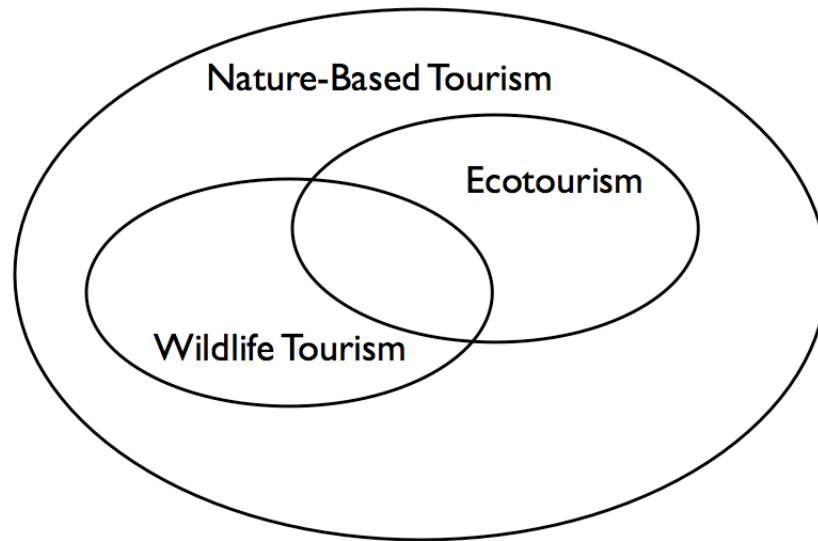


Figure 4.3: The Relationship Between Nature-Based Tourism, Ecotourism and Wildlife Tourism.

As Figure 4.3 illustrates, not all ecotourism is wildlife tourism and not all wildlife tourism is ecotourism; therefore the two sub-sets overlap. A problem with the figure, however, is that it assumes that all wildlife tourism is nature-based, just as all ecotourism is nature-based, when in fact this is not always the case. Certainly all wildlife is ‘nature’; therefore, it could be said that all wildlife tourism is based *on* an experience with nature. However, some wildlife tourism experiences, particularly those involving captive wildlife, take place in settings (such as zoos) that are not based *in* nature. Figure 4.4 illustrates the relationship between nature-based tourism, ecotourism, wildlife tourism and zoos (as an example) when it is understood that wildlife tourism is based *in*, rather than *on*, nature.

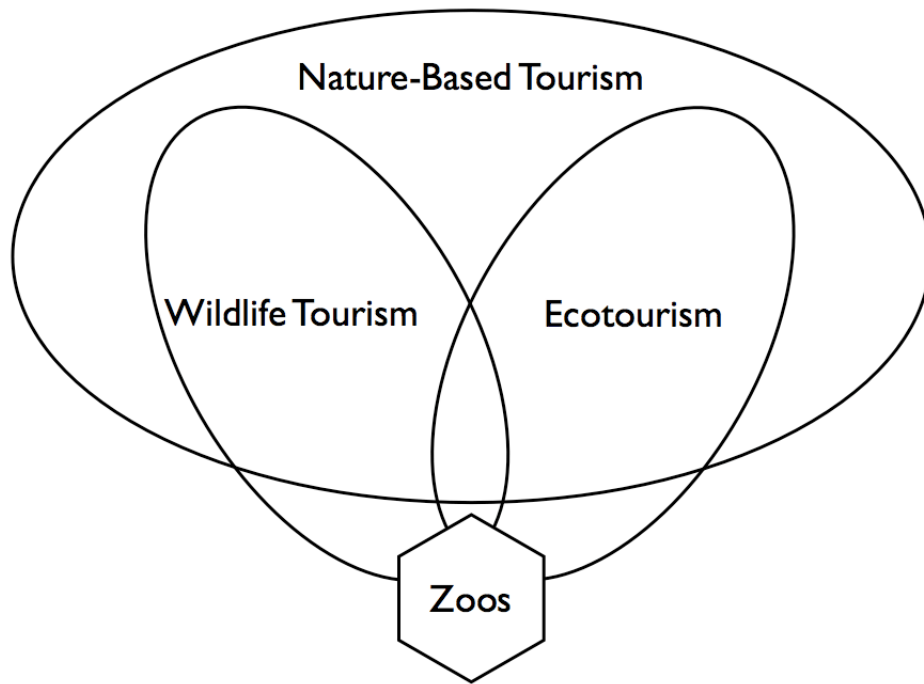


Figure 4.4: The Relationship Between Tourism Forms When Wildlife Tourism Based In, Rather Than On, Nature.

Given the close relationship between wildlife and ecotourism it is reasonable to assume that characteristics of ecotourists are shared by some wildlife tourists. For example, ecotourists are more likely to possess an environmental ethic, be more biocentric than anthropocentric oriented, strive for first hand experience, expect an educative and interpretive element to their experience, and aim to benefit wildlife and/or the environment (Balantine and Eagles 1994). Fennell (2006:184) further argues that “those who participate (in ecotourism) should be sensitive to the rights of animals as a first priority.”

A discussion about the relationship between anthropology and wildlife tourism is warranted here. However, it is necessary first to understand anthropology’s history of academic engagement with animals, in particular wildlife. This discussion takes

place in section 4.6, following an overview of the relationship between anthropology and the environment.

#### **4.5 An Anthropology of the Environment<sup>33</sup>**

Herodotus is often called the ‘father of history’ (Myres 1971), but he may equally be labelled as the father of anthropology and environmental science. Around 400BC he travelled into Persia and Egypt, and in his subsequent writings attempted to explain the cultural and social differences among societies as due to climate and local geography. Though rarely credited for this attempt at what could be seen as environmental determinism, he was clearly one of the first to write about connections between the social and environmental aspects of life.

The history of anthropological theorising on human-environment relations is long. It probably stems from environmental determinism in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The branch of ecological anthropology links with studies commenced in the late 1940s and early 1950s by well-known scholars such as Julian Steward, Roy Rappaport and Marvin Harris, who focused on concepts of carrying capacity and subsistence strategies (Rose 2005:32). Steward (1955), who coined the term cultural ecology, studied the response of sociocultural systems to ecological adaptations, while Rappaport (1967, 1968, 1971) used a systems theory model to argue that cultural forms were an adaptive response to physical pressures arising from environmental conditions.<sup>34</sup> Harris (1974, 1975, 1977, 1979), a proponent of cultural materialism who gets labelled a functional ecologist (Nanda and Warms 2004:397), theorised biological

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<sup>33</sup> Some of the material in this section was presented at the Australian Anthropological Society conference in Sydney in 2003, at its inaugural session on Environmental Anthropology. The paper was co-authored with Catherine Howlett and remains unpublished.

<sup>34</sup> See McArthur (1974) and Townsend (2000: 30-32) for critiques of Rappaport’s work.

imperatives of survival in ecosystems to be the primary shaping forces in the development of local cultural traditions.

Cultural ecology is a way of looking at how environmental factors shape particular cultural features and assumes that certain “cultural features evolved as adaptations to their local environment” (Herzfeld 2001:178). Steward (1955:37) called the set of cultural features influenced more by the environment than other features the “cultural core.” Cultural ecology assumes that analysis of the relationships between certain aspects of a culture and the features of the local environment may demonstrate how and why those aspects originated and continue to persist (Milton 1996:43). It was thought that those environmental features most closely linked to activities of subsistence would be the ones most likely to influence cultural development (Milton 1996:43).

Cultural ecology is a broad approach that takes into account more than just those environmental factors that contribute to the necessities of life. In contrast, cultural materialism takes the view that only societies which manage their natural resources in a rational way will survive in their local environment, an approach that has been argued to lack scientific rigor (Herzfeld 2001:179).

Dissatisfaction with the cultural ecology approach and the growing influence of the science of ecology led to adoption of an ecosystems approach in anthropology: that is, studying people as part of ecosystems. This approach emphasises the interactive nature of the relationship between humans and their environment by stressing, in some definitions, their bounded nature (Milton 1996:55). This promotion of a more holistic approach, that firmly places people in nature, became popular in all four of

the traditional subfields of anthropology<sup>35</sup> (Townsend 2000:32-33) and is “probably the most important contribution of the ecosystems model” (Milton 1996:56).

Adoption of the ecosystem approach by anthropologists in the 1960s served to marginalise the concept of culture, which until then had been a principal unit of analysis and object of explanation for ecological anthropology (Milton 1996:56-57, 59). This is not surprising, given that the model was developed in the 1930s and 1940s, and later refined, by biologists studying non-cultural organisms. Thus, human populations became principal units of analysis as cultural ecology gave way to a broader human ecology (Milton 1996:55, 57). “Human ecology ... incorporates both people’s ecological activities and their understanding of the world, and ... seeks to understand the relationship between these two spheres.” It “offers potentially valuable contributions to environmental discourse” (Milton 1996:59) and has profound influence on the contemporary shape of environmental anthropology.

This history shows how ecological forms of anthropology, in particular cultural ecology and human ecology, have informed contemporary environmental anthropology yet remain distinctly different. Brosius (1999:278) notes a “sharp discontinuity” between the ecological anthropology of the 1960s and early 1970s and present-day environmental anthropology: in particular, that environmental anthropology draws its insights from a much wider range of sources.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> The four traditional subfields of anthropology are cultural, biological/physical, archaeology and linguistics (Lavenda and Schultz 2007:8).

<sup>36</sup> Distinctions between ecological anthropology and environmental anthropology, however, are not always drawn. Many anthropologists, particularly in North America it seems, have followed the common usage of environment to refer to biophysical factors; however, when used in its etymological sense of ‘surroundings’, environment also refers to human interaction with and interpretation of the biophysical context.



Without getting too immersed in this difference, it is important to note before completing this history that environmental anthropology is also influenced by political ecology, which was first proposed by Eric Wolf in 1972 as an outgrowth of political economy approaches. “Political ecology attempts to understand cultural adaptation by taking into account other societies as part of the environment, as well as features of the biophysical environment” and became the most widely used approach in environmental anthropology in the 1980s and 1990s (Townsend 2000:51).

This brings us to the 21<sup>st</sup> century where, as Townsend (2000:cover) notes:

The role of the environmental anthropologist has been to organize the realities of interdependent plants, animals, and human beings, to advocate for the neediest among them, and to try passionately to save what is of value and importance to the survival of a diverse world.

The history outlined above,<sup>37</sup> together with the global environment’s profile in scientific interest and mounting public concern, has seen anthropologists continuing to contribute to the study of the environment in these, but also in new and exciting, ways.

So, what is environmental anthropology? Although I like the phrase ‘an Anthropology of the Environment’, this field of enquiry is more commonly found under the label ‘Environmental Anthropology’. It could be that the first term describes the study of environmental science by anthropology, and the second is about anthropology embedded within environmental science, but that is a distinction I have drawn here and have not seen elsewhere. Certainly both terms describe the

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<sup>37</sup> For more information on the history of environmental anthropology see Brosius (1999), and Townsend (2000).

application of principles of anthropology to the study of the environment, and I have used environmental anthropology throughout this discussion simply because it is both more common and more succinct. As this relationship is still evolving, it is easier to explore rather than explain.

Statements drawn from recent literature often suggest that environmental anthropology is a relatively new field of applied anthropology. The place of an ecosystems approach to studying people and the environment was discussed above in relation to the four traditional subfields of anthropology,<sup>38</sup> which do not include applied anthropology. Applied anthropology, the application of anthropological theory and methods to the real-world problems, is either regarded as a fifth subfield (Figure 4.5) or a dimension of each of the other subfields (Figure 4.6) (Townsend 2000:5). Environmental anthropology is almost always seen as a subset of applied anthropology, as illustrated in Figures 4.5 and 4.6.

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<sup>38</sup> These four subfields are sometimes referred to as subdisciplines, and further divisions as specialisations (for example, Mullin 2002:387).

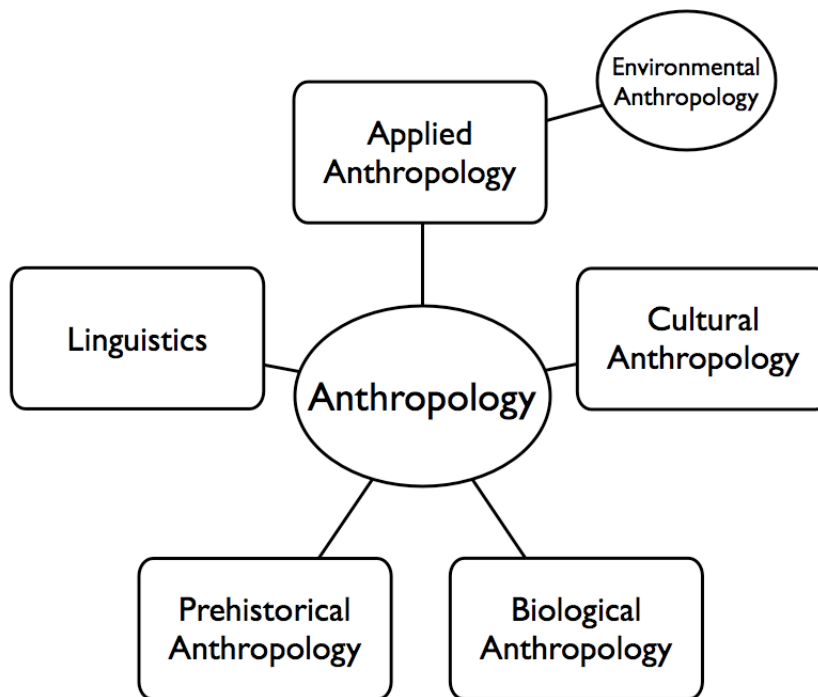


Figure 4.5: The Five Subfields of Anthropology Including Environmental Anthropology as a part of Applied Anthropology.

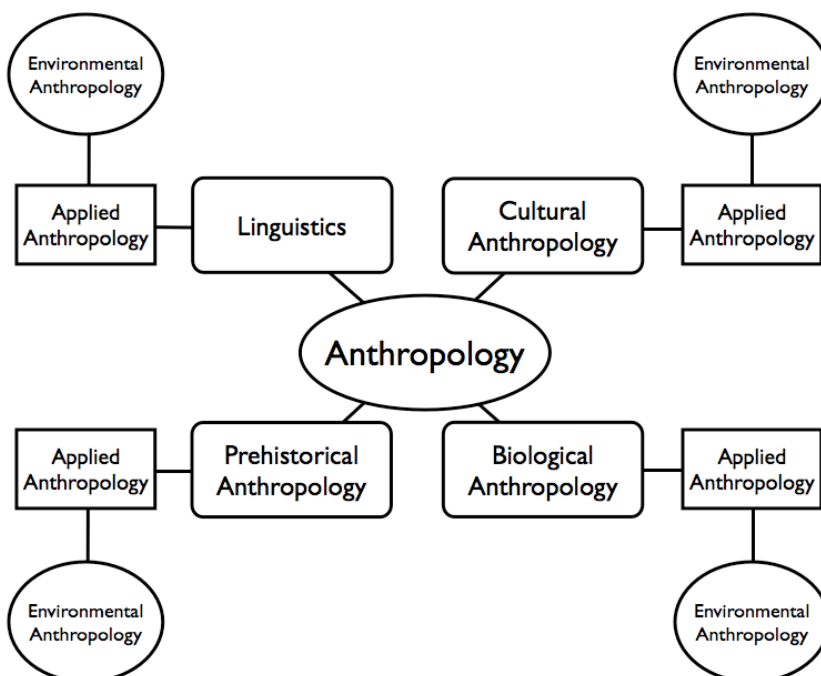


Figure 4.6: Environmental Anthropology as a Subset of Applied Anthropology in the Four Traditional Subfields of Anthropology.

Of course, all disciplines have subfields and internal specialisations, but the subfields of anthropology are unusual for their varying and complex ties to the natural sciences, as well as the social sciences (Mullin 2002:387) and for the breadth of material they cover. This complexity allows an obvious entry point for environmental anthropology. Sharing similar features with the definition, above, of applied anthropology, Townsend (2000:106) succinctly defines environmental anthropology as “the use of anthropology’s methods and theories to contribute to the understanding of local or global environmental problems.” However it is conceptualised, one of the key values of environmental anthropology lies in its ability to be applied. As such, it may help governments and private organisations make environmental policy and plan programs (Society for Applied Anthropology 2007), for example. It embraces an amalgamation of various environmental topics that anthropology has been dealing with for a long time, as shown above, to, amongst other things, assess the relationship between a community and its environment and the potential consequences of changes to that relationship.

As offspring of a marriage between environmental science and anthropology, environmental anthropologists rely on their knowledge of environmental science and social research methods to make sense of the world. They use participant observation, surveys, interviews, social and environmental assessment techniques, and others, to determine the social, political, cultural and environmental dynamics of a community. Environmental anthropologists may take on applied roles as cultural translators or environmental advocates (Mulcock *et al.* 2005:281).

Environmental anthropology considers the interactions between humans and the environment. It moves the focus from the physical and biological dimensions of

human problems to their social and cultural dimensions. Although I use the term in a singular form throughout this thesis, Mulcock *et al.* (2005:282) refer to “anthropologies of the environment” in recognition of the fact that this area of study includes cultural ecology, ecological anthropology, ethno-ecology, environmentalism, environmental movements, environmental justice, and natural resource anthropology.

Discussion, above, of the four traditional (Figure 4.6), and five not so traditional (Figure 4.5), subfields of anthropology considered environmental anthropology as a recent part of applied anthropology. It did not include an argument for environmental anthropology as a subfield in its own right, which may yet be a status it could gain. Having discussed subfields, it is also relevant to examine the five key themes of anthropology in relation to their overlap with environmental science, as this too gives a very clear picture of the strengths of environmental anthropology.

The five themes are universalism, holism, integration and the world system, adaptation, and cultural relativism (Howard 1996:3-8), and each of these has relevance to environmental anthropology. Universalism, while stating that “all people are fully and equally human” and therefore are “all the subjects of anthropological studies” acknowledges that people, despite being cultural beings, are still part of the animal kingdom (Howard 1996:4). This has much in common with a social justice perspective (Ife 2002), grouping all peoples together on the basis of their shared humanity and survival based on the sharing of cultures<sup>39</sup> yet not denying their shared nature with other animal species.

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<sup>39</sup> American anthropologist Franz Boas, with his relativistic position, was the first to use the term culture in the plural, promoting the idea different groups of people shared different cultural features and characteristics, and thus there were many cultures (Langness 1985:40).

As perhaps its most optimistic goal, anthropology has always sought to understand “all aspects of the human condition” (Howard 1996:4), an aim so broad that it is easy to see why its subfields are so diverse. This multifaceted concern stems from a concept of holism that is also a necessary approach to understanding the complexity of environmental issues, and links with the next theme of integration.

Emphasising how the various aspects of life function together, at the level of culture but also at the level of a larger world system, is the purpose of the integration theme of anthropology (Howard 1996:5). This is in some ways reminiscent of David Suzuki’s “think globally, act locally” catch phrase (David Suzuki Foundation 2007) for promoting environmental sustainability to the masses, an approach necessary for understanding the integrated characteristics of environmental issues.

Anthropology has since its very beginnings recognised that “humans, like other animals, are influenced by their surroundings, or environment” (Howard 1996:6). This includes both a social environment, within which members of the same species interact, and the physical environment, within which we interact with non-human species and landforms.<sup>40</sup> Because adaptation to environments has always been a fundamental tenet of anthropology, it may be argued that aspects of anthropology have in fact always been environmental anthropology.

The final theme, and perhaps the one that has caused anthropology the most controversy, is that of cultural relativism.<sup>41</sup> The edict of interpreting others in terms of their traditions and experiences (Howard 1996:8) is a challenging one (some

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<sup>40</sup> This distinction depends on the definition, and construction, of a social environment. It may be argued that inter-species interact socially, for example, in the case of humans and their domesticated pets.

<sup>41</sup> Franz Boas, described by Margaret Mead (1959:35) as the father of ‘scientific anthropology’, is also credited for fathering the idea of cultural relativism (Langness 1985:45).

would say impossible, based on the inability to discard one's own entrenched cultural beliefs). However, environmental problems often arise from not taking into account differing knowledges and perceptions, as will be discussed in the next chapter and throughout the case studies.

Discussion of anthropological subfields and themes in this way shows that the void between anthropology and environmental science is not deep. Anthropology already has the necessary basics for engaging with this field. It has done in the past, and can continue to do so. Engaging with this field offers many opportunities but, of course, is not without challenges. The previous sections of this chapter demonstrated a growth in the relevance of the anthropology of tourism, and the same can be said for the growth of environmental anthropology.<sup>42</sup>

Environmental anthropology has grown out of ecological anthropology, cultural ecology and cultural materialism. Essentially interdisciplinary in nature, the breadth of enquiry afforded to environmental anthropology offers exciting opportunities for collaboration between anthropology and other disciplines. It also continues to strengthen the broad base of anthropology, boosting its relevance in contemporary settings.

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<sup>42</sup> For example, a series entitled 'Studies in Environmental Anthropology and Ethnobiology' was launched in 2005 (Argyrou 2005) as a vehicle for publishing work that focuses on the interrelationship between society, culture and the environment. On the back cover of each of the books in the series is the statement that: "Interest in environmental anthropology has grown steadily in recent years, reflecting national and international concern about the environment and developing research priorities" (Argyrou 2005, Sillitoe 2006). In the first volume, Argyrou (2005) explores the logic of environmentalism from the perspective of anthropology and ecology. In the fourth volume, Sillitoe (ed) (2006) focusses on local (often indigenous) knowledge versus scientific knowledge. Other examples were given earlier (for example, in Chapter 1) of the December 2005 special edition of *The Anthropology Journal of Australia* (TAJA) on 'Australian Anthropologies of the Environment', and a special issue (3:2) of the *Conservation and Society* journal (2005) on anthropological investigations on environmental issues.

In the Australian context, research in environmental anthropology has been conducted concerning the relationships indigenous Australians have with their environment and the integral nature these relationships have in their culture. Information has also been collected about flora and fauna through studies of Aboriginal subsistence (Mulcock *et al.* 2005:284). Some recent studies have focussed on indigenous ways of knowing the environment (Seine 2005, Suchet 2002) and how this differs from non-indigenous scientific knowledge (Smith 2006). Clearly work in the field of environmental anthropology has been, and continues to be, done and it is not solely in the area of indigenous studies (as will be discussed below). There exists a need to understand not only how the fields of environmental science and anthropology have overlapped in the past, but also how they might productively be engaged in the future.

#### **4.5.1 Engaging Anthropology and Environmental Science**

What do anthropology and environmental science have in common? What opportunities, and barriers, determine effective collaboration between the two? This section explores the relevance of anthropology to environmental science: from the applicability of its research methodologies to its ability to contribute theoretically to contested notions of, for example, sustainability, community, and conservation. This, in turn, gives justification for the aims of the thesis. Case study material demonstrates the breadth of engagement of anthropology in research and teaching in environmental fields. Exciting opportunities for collaboration between anthropology and environmental disciplines exist, and have the potential to strengthen both the broad base of anthropology and its relevance in contemporary settings. After exploring some opportunities and challenges, the section concludes with the



argument that anthropology is an essential component in a holistic approach to understanding environmental issues.

Despite a long history, in some respects the formal overlap between anthropology and environmental science, particularly in Australia, is relatively new. It took time to realise the appropriateness of anthropology as a way to view and understand the environment, and even longer to accept environment studies as applicable to the field of anthropology. Like the anthropology of tourism, environmental anthropology took time to become established; however, now it is, much important work is being done. For examples of this we can look to the contemporary publications of anthropologists such as Burns (2006), Hytten and Burns (2007a), Milton (1993, 1996, 2002, 2005), Peace (2005a, 2005b), Pocock (2005, 2006), Strang (2004, 2005), Toussaint (2005), and Trigger (2006, in press).

In contemporary scholarly thinking, where concerns with the environment and humanity are dominant, the relationship between the two becomes obvious. Humans have affected, and continue to affect, every part of the planet. Consequently, natural systems cannot be understood independently of social systems any more than social systems cannot be understood independently of natural ones (Berkes and Folke 1998). The two are intrinsically and inseparably linked. Thus an inescapable challenge of finding solutions to environmental problems demands answering questions about human interactions with the environment and embracing interdisciplinary approaches. An anthropological approach to understanding these systems, and the connections between them, offers valuable themes in integration, holism and comparison. In addition, anthropology is the ideal basis for the

conceptualisation of the relationships between these systems because it fosters respect, appreciation, and understanding of cultural issues.

There are many opportunities for environmental anthropology in Australia, and my intention here is to briefly highlight only some. Perhaps the most obvious opportunity presents itself as a consequence of the realisation that Western belief systems, with their emphasis on economic development and progress, have promoted unsustainable use of resources and environmental degradation (Collins 2005:324). This has led to a re-evaluation of non-Western management of lands, which can offer vital lessons for enhancing sustainable development practices. The value of the alternative solutions, based on different knowledge and perceptions of the environment, has led to increasing international collaboration with researchers and government agencies and offers enormous potential for further research (Baker, Davies and Young 2001).

Impact assessment, for example, has become legislatively entrenched in many jurisdictions and is now a standard within resource management systems (Howitt 2001:324). It is an unfortunate reality, often cited in the literature, that major resource development projects have the potential to dramatically affect communities and render their interests invisible (see Howitt 2001, O'Faircheallaigh 2002, and Ross 2001). Social Impact Assessment (SIA), a key component of impact assessment processes, offers an opportunity to address the power inequities in resource management systems. There are many barriers to effective participation in SIA however, not least a distinct lack of cross-cultural expertise in resource management systems. This deficiency offers a further opportunity for scholars of environmental anthropology.

Environmental scientists can benefit from the knowledge of environmental anthropology. Almost all environmental problems are caused by humans, and cultural theory can make a contribution to the field of environmental science (Milton 1996). Environmental anthropologists are able to record and interpret the cultural values and practices that influence the way humans interact with and manage their environment. Once we can better understand the relationship between humans and their environment we may be better equipped to effectively address the problems (Mulcock *et al.* 2005:287).

Environmental anthropologists have been contributing to the understanding of the way humans interact with the environment in areas such as agriculture, landscape, water management, marine resources and conservation (Mulcock *et al.* 2005:283). As Fennell (2006:329) notes, “phenomena such as conservation and sustainability ... beg for an interdisciplinary approach.” Such an approach has the potential to facilitate the sharing of knowledge between environmental science and environmental anthropology (Mulcock *et al.* 2005:288).

Significant difficulties, however, attend any partnership between anthropology and environmental science. Perhaps the most serious of these is recognition. Do the two fields of inquiry have enough to offer in a partnership? I think so and, as history shows, even without formal recognition they have been successfully engaged for a long time. In the indigenous Australian context, for example, in the 1930s Donald Thompson (1932, 1935, 1937, 1957) wrote about seasonal factors in human culture, and in the 1940s Margaret McArthur (1974) wrote on resource use. Other scholars in the field include Athol Chase (1970, 1980, 1990), Rhys Jones (1980), Betty Meehan (1982), William Stanner (1979), and Peter Sutton (1995).

The merging of anthropology and environmental science in such a way that maintains their individual integrity while including a joint area of study (see Figure 4.7) has much to offer both. Combining anthropology and environmental science is good for anthropology and good for environmental science. As discussed earlier, in recent years the question of anthropology's relevance to the modern world has been raised in conference discussions and texts (see, for example, Ahmed and Shore 1995, and Kapferer 2007). Researching human involvement in environmental issues is one area in which anthropology can continue to be very relevant.

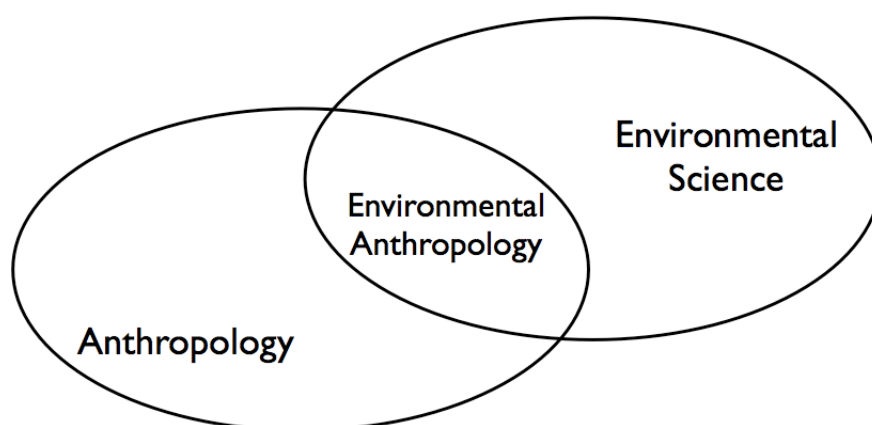


Figure 4.7: Environmental Anthropology at the Interface of Anthropology and Environmental Science.

A further challenge relates to the theoretical location of environmental anthropology. Environmental anthropology has been firmly located in the field of applied anthropology (Figures 4.5 and 4.6), as anthropologists are employed, for example, to mediate between resource users and traditional land owners. But this should not be its only location. Environmental anthropology needs a theoretical base, like that previously drawn from an ecological focus for ecological anthropology. In the search for this base, it may be useful to look to the literature from natural resource

management. One could argue that environmental anthropology is being undertaken under the guise of human geography in, for example, studies that focus on the location of place (Head 2000a, 2000b, Low and Lawrence-Zuniga 2003). However, where the theoretical underpinning comes from is perhaps not as crucial as the need for it to be seriously considered. Such consideration and ultimate adoption of theory would assist with the legitimisation of environmental anthropology beyond the realm of simply an applied anthropological field.

As with the discussion of opportunities, my intention here is to highlight only some of the challenges and suggest ways they could be overcome. A final one, the issue of interdisciplinarity, earlier posed as an opportunity for anthropological contribution to environmental issues, needs to be interrogated. “An ‘interdisciplinary approach’ implies the pooling of knowledge and expertise, the creation of a joint enterprise to produce a deeper or more complete understanding” (Milton 1996:219). There are several barriers to effective interdisciplinarity, and general lack of acceptance of interdisciplinary work is one that needs to be mentioned. Head (2000b) argues that no single model of ecological understanding can hope to deal with the increasing complexity of environmental problems. Any study of the environment necessarily requires appreciation, knowledge and understanding of the role of human interaction with it. Early Australian environmental science schools, such as those established at Griffith and Murdoch Universities, have long promoted the value of an interdisciplinary approach to study of the environment. The world of anthropology has been slower to catch on, more recently recognising that anthropological thinking and theorising should be incorporated as an important part, but importantly only a part, of environmental science.

In the concluding chapter of her book on *Environmentalism and Cultural Theory*, Milton (1996:219) cautions against the desire to uncritically embrace an interdisciplinary approach. Although Benton and Redclift (1994:13) discuss the need for finding “common ground” between disciplines, Milton suggests that such ground can only be identified when we know where the boundaries of each discipline are drawn (1996:219). She argues that, rather than diluting itself by merging with other disciplines, anthropology should stake out its territory on environmental matters thereby recognising the distinctiveness of its contribution (p219). As the basis for this argument, Milton is concerned that an interdisciplinary approach implies a common perspective, rather than a multitude of perspectives. I see it differently, however, in that an interdisciplinary approach can involve many perspectives coming together over a common issue (such as the environment). This concurs with Fennell’s (2006:330) view of interdisciplinary research as “the integration of ideas from across fields and directed towards a common goal.” Fennell argues the need to both continue specialisation but also engage in interdisciplinarity, especially in efforts to address global issues (2006:332).

The value of intellectual diversity is based on the assumption that by examining something in different ways we increase our knowledge and understanding of it (Milton 1996:220). Hence, while Milton concedes that environmental issues are fertile common ground for intellectual debate, she argues for a study of them which is multidisciplinary rather than interdisciplinary (1996:221).

Moore *et al.* (2007) tackle the lack of clarity regarding definitions of integrative, cross-disciplinary and multidisciplinary research and, within these ‘umbrella’ terms,

the further confusion between multi-, inter- and trans-disciplinary labels.<sup>43</sup> They argue that interdisciplinary research is a synthesis of two or more disciplines, achieved by crossing disciplinary boundaries (Tress *et al.* 2004, Choi and Pak 2006), which results in a new integrative knowledge useful to science and society (Moore *et al.* 2007). This definition lies behind my attempt to blend anthropology with environmental science and tourism.

A further barrier to true interdisciplinarity (or even effective multidisciplinary) lies in the vexed area of cross-disciplinary communication. For ideas, and solutions, to be effectively understood between and implemented by anthropology and environmental science the two disciplines need to be able to share a communication style, or language. This is made difficult by the fact that different disciplines usually embody conflicting epistemologies and methodologies (Moore *et al.* 2007). However, creating a common language sharing anthropological understanding with environmental scientists may help us to find better solutions to environmental problems (Mulcock *et al.* 2005:288).<sup>44</sup>

This discussion has focussed on the relationship between anthropology and the environment where environment has been understood as all plants and animals and even inanimate forms such as landscape and natural elements (rain, wind, etc). Environmental anthropologists who explore these diverse forms of environment are growing in number (see, for example, Strang 2004 and 2005 on water) and anthropologists have recently produced “some outstanding material on

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<sup>43</sup> Jantsch (1972, cited in Fennell 2006:331) illustrates the differences in cooperation and coordination between disciplinary, multidisciplinary, pluridisciplinary, cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary research.

<sup>44</sup> See Strober (2007) for a recent analysis of the various factors that impede and enhance cross-disciplinary conversations.

environmentalisms” (Benthall 2007:1).<sup>45</sup> As the focus of this thesis is on wildlife tourism, I now turn to discussion of anthropology and animals, paving the way for exploration of environmental anthropology and wildlife tourism.

## **4.6 Anthropology and Animals**

Although anthropological commentary on animals is not new, a dedicated area of “animal studies still is largely unknown among anthropologists” (Mullins 2002:387). Similarly, Noske (1997:169) claims that “there exists no anthropology of animals, only an (anthropocentric) anthropology of humans in relation to animals.” So, how do anthropologists deal with animals?

Studies of primates, for example, are conducted within the fields of physical or biological anthropology. However, because anthropology’s primary focus is people, the name of the discipline literally meaning ‘the study of man’, any focus on animals has been primarily from an anthropocentric perspective on how and why animals are important to people and culture.<sup>46</sup> This is exemplified by by Leeds and Vayda (1965) in their edited book on the role of animals in human ecological adaptation.

It is not my intention to argue for an anthropological study of animals, though others have (*e.g.*, Griffin 1981:148-152, Haraway 1986, and Noske 1997). Instead, I want to use this setting as the appropriate place to introduce the discussion of the relationship between nature and culture (which I will later refine to wildlife and people) in anthropological, and other, literature. This will be examined in more detail in Chapter Six. A discussion of animals is one example of the way in which

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<sup>45</sup> See, for example, Argyrou (2005), Brosius (1999), Kempton, Boster and Hartley (1995), Milton (1993, 1996), and Verweij and Thompson (2006).

<sup>46</sup> See, for example, Ewers (1955), Shankin (1985) and Thompson (1957).



anthropology has sought to separate, distinguish between, and even polarise, the natural world from the cultural world. In this dichotomy, culture is seen as superior, organised and controlled; it exists only in the human realm. Nature is inferior, chaotic and disordered, and is the realm of non-humans.<sup>47</sup>

From an anthropocentric standpoint, nature is a hyper-separate lower order, lacking any real continuity with the human. This approach stresses heavily those features that make humans different from nature and animals, rather than those we share with them (Plumwood 2003:54).

With an anthropocentric focus on people, and the belief that humans are the only species to have culture, it became obvious that the realm of culture would transcend that of nature in anthropological thinking. This in turn both strengthens and legitimises the role of anthropology in its study of people. Once this philosophy was put in place, it became necessary to find evidence to support it. The long held assumption that animals do not have culture is perhaps one of the strongest pieces of evidence.

Anthropologists conduct, and produce, ethnographies of people. Is it possible to undertake the same research with animals? This is clearly not possible if ethnography is solely about documenting culture, and culture is deemed a unique human trait. However, some anthropologists have broken with tradition and attempted an ethnography of animals. Whiten *et al.* (2001), for example, have produced an ethnography of chimpanzee culture.

While most anthropologists now concede that some animals interact socially within societies (such as bees) and that they communicate with each other, there is still no

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<sup>47</sup> Some feminist theorists have challenged this, perhaps most notably Sherry Ortner, who asks 'Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?' (1974, 1996). This questioning, however, accepts the dichotomy while investigating the "pan-cultural second-class" status of women within it (Ortner 1996:27).

common agreement on whether or not animals have language. This is important because language remains one of the last few differences assumed to be unique to humans. The history of this perspective lies in the thinking of western moral philosophers who, before the advent of environmental ethics, granted moral standing only to humans based on observable traits such as rationality or linguistic ability (Callicott 2006:124).

In the West, especially, this gulf [between 'One' and 'Other'] is usually established by constructing non-humans as lacking in the very department that Western rationalist culture has valued above all else and identified with the human – that of mind, rationality, or spirit – and what is often seen as the outward expression of mind in the form of language and communication. The excluded group is conceived, instead, in the reductionist terms established by mind/body or reason/nature dualism: 'mere' bodies, which can thus be servants, slave, tools or instruments for human needs and projects. Reductionist and dualistic constructions of the non-human remain common today, especially among scientists (Plumwood 2003:53).

Coupled with this, anthropology has been no different from other sciences in its avoidance of anthropomorphism (Milton 2005), as will be examined further in Chapter Six.

It is not necessary within the scope of this thesis to detail all the studies undertaken in an attempt to determine not only whether or not animals have language but also whether or not they are capable of learning language. Early experiments with chimpanzees, raised as children in human families and exposed to language in the same way as a human child would be, demonstrated that chimps lacked some of the physiological features that enable humans to speak. Following this, the tactics changed to teaching animals language by symbols or signs, with varying degrees of success (Yule 2006).

Charles Hockett (1963) devised a list of a dozen features of language, which were later refined to eight. This provided a base-line against which to test animal linguistic ability. Humans, of course, were capable of exhibiting all of the features, animals only some. From this, rather biased and certainly anthropocentric approach, the conclusion was then drawn that humans have language, and culture, and animals do not.<sup>48</sup>

The debate continues into this century. In 2002 Dominique Lestel noted that “the question of animal cultures has once again become a subject of debate in ethology” (2002:35). Regardless of the answer, what is important about this debate is the separation it implies between people and animals in terms of the culture and nature categories.

Of course, the relationship between people and animals is not just studied by anthropologists. The *Society and Animals* journal, publishing manuscripts by authors from a wide range of disciplines, is an example of this interest. In the Australian context the inaugural conference of the Animals and Society Study Group was held in Perth in 2005 with a second conference in Tasmania in 2007. In 2005 it was hosted by the anthropology department at the University of Western Australia, and understandably was attended by a large number of anthropologists, including Ade Peace, Jane Mulcock, Adrian Franklin, and Barbara Noske. However, the second conference was much larger, attracting a greater diversity of speakers, and American biologist Marc Bekoff was a plenary speaker.

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<sup>48</sup> The use of tools is a further skill used to differentiate humans from animals. This argument is currently on even shakier ground than that of language. See, for example, Herzfeld and Lestel (2005), and Lestel and Grundmann (1999).

Although Lestel, Brunois and Gaunet (2006:155) defend the idea of “a new science at the interface between human and animal sciences” that combines etho-ethnology and ethno-ethnology, I think it remains clear that many disciplines can, and should, contribute to the study of people and animals and their interactions. My intention here is to demonstrate that anthropology can make a positive contribution to this field, particularly in the discourses on wildlife and wildlife tourism.<sup>49</sup>

#### **4.6.1 Anthropology and Wildlife (Tourism)**

Following on from the earlier sections of this chapter which addressed the relationship between anthropology and tourism, and the relationship between anthropology and the environment, we can now bring together the themes of anthropology, wildlife and tourism. Obviously overlapping with the field of anthropology and animals, similarly an anthropological foray into wildlife, where wildlife are undomesticated animals, is not new. Much has been written about the relationships between humans and nature, and within that humans and wildlife. However, the more scientific, and therefore frequently considered more serious, study of wildlife has traditionally belonged to natural scientists, particularly those schooled in the field of conservation biology and/or natural resource management. This has resulted in quantitative assessments of human-wildlife issues, borne out of the pragmatic and pressing need to learn how to manipulate wildlife and effectively manage humans (Goedeke and Herda-Rapp 2005:9).

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<sup>49</sup> In recent years, anthropological voices have weighed in on campaigns to save certain charismatic megafauna, for example, whales (Kalland 1993), and written on dolphins and human encounters (Servais 2005).

The body of scholarship exploring people's involvement with wildlife is frequently termed "the human or social dimension of wildlife" and has only gained prominence as an area of investigation in the last three decades (Goedeke and Herda-Rapp 2005:9). In this time, anthropologists, sociologists and historians have looked at wildlife issues in a qualitative way. Their work has illustrated the importance of culture in shaping human understanding of and relationships to wildlife over time (p11), and highlighted that people form cultural relationships to wildlife which are mediated by their own definition of nature (p12).

There remains, however, a lack of study on the human dimensions in the field of wildlife management (Howard 2007) in both developing (Saberwal and Kothari 1996) and industrialised countries (Jacobsen and McDuff 1998). The journal *Human Dimensions of Wildlife*, goes some way towards addressing this gap, but clearly more is needed. Those writing about wildlife management often argue that there is especially a need for increased training of managers in the area of human issues (Cannon, Dietz and Dietz 1996).

A notable text that explores anthropological perspectives about wildlife, particularly in situations where the wildlife is in conflict with people, is that edited by Knight (2000b). Continuing his anthropological study of relationships between people and animals, especially where those relationships involve conflict, Knight published *Waiting for Wolves in Japan* in 2003, and a further edited volume in 2005. While some of this work touches on issues relevant to wildlife tourism, tourism has rarely been the central focus. The topic of conflict in wildlife-human interactions, however, has clearly generated research interest. Herda-Rapp and Goedeke edited a book in the same year (2005) in which contributors were invited to comment on how

insights, gained from using constructionist theory and applied to their particular case studies, could assist with the understanding of wildlife-related conflicts (p15).

The demand to see wild animals has grown significantly over the past 20 years and continues to grow at a significant rate (Curtin 2005). Coupled with this are increasing interactions between people and wildlife in an increasingly wide range of settings. As previously mentioned, these interactions have both positive and negative impacts on both the people and the wildlife. Consequently, there is a need to understand these interactions in the context in which they occur.

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

The scholarly establishment of both an anthropology of tourism and an anthropology of the environment have been recent additions to the academic literature. While the number and breadth of publications in these areas appear to be increasing, an anthropological foray into wildlife tourism has been much rarer.

It has been argued throughout this chapter that anthropologists should study tourism (see Figure 4.8). Anthropology at its very core is concerned with the holistic and comparative study of human societies and cultures. Its aim is to look at all the components of, and influences on, those societies and cultures. Tourism is both a component and influence for many peoples around the globe today.

The systems approach sees tourism as a system incorporating many elements that need to be examined as part of a holistic analysis. In this, tourism is “seen as part of a general social process in a complex, interconnected globe illustrating the nature of underlying value systems in a modern world” (P. Burns 1999:81). Anthropology

offers a valuable approach to the critical analysis of tourism through its holistic and comparative framework; that is, the ability to bring the local and the global together by recognising the interconnectedness of social, cultural, environmental, religious, political and economic domains (P. Burns 1999:88).

“Anthropologists, and other social scientists, argue that people ... lie at the heart of the need to analyse tourism” (P. Burns 1999:88), and this is evidenced by the fact that tourism is widespread in human society. There are very few places left on our planet that have not been reached by tourists, and increasingly fewer people who have not travelled. Consequently, tourism has the potential to affect all of humankind. In addition, tourism involves contact between cultures and subcultures as tourists travel to places outside their normal places of work and rest. Finally, it cannot be denied that tourism contributes to the transformation of societies and cultures and environments. It may not be the sole cause of such transformation, but it undeniably plays a role regardless of the size or location of the society or culture being transformed (Figure 4.8).

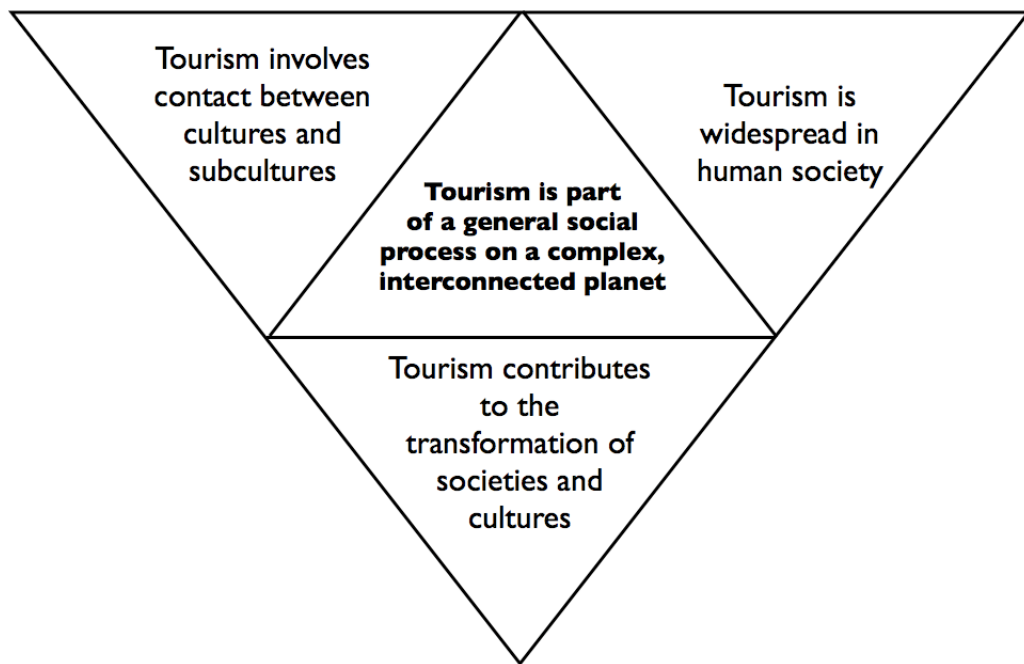


Figure 4.8: Why Anthropologists Should Study Tourism (adapted from P. Burns 1999:81, after Nash 1981).

Anthropology has established a base in tourism studies, but where does it go from here? It would appear that anthropological theories informing tourism research and analysis have progressed over the last 30 years (see examples in Nash 2007).<sup>50</sup> As the types of tourists, and forms of tourism, change, and focus shifts from economic and marketing justifications to considerations of environmental and cultural implications, the voices of the range of stakeholders involved in the tourism

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<sup>50</sup> Relationships between hosts and guests, how they form and change over time, have been of profound importance to the anthropological study of tourism, and should continue to be (c.f. Ryan and Huyton 2001). So too, empirical and analytical work on tourism impacts and tourist types maintains a crucial platform in this literature (see, for example, Archer, Cooper and Ruhanen 2005, Hall 2005, Hepburn 2002, Joseph and Kavoori 2001, Wickens 2002). There is, however, much more about tourism that anthropologists could, and should, examine in a critical and theoretical fashion. For example, voices from the host perspective, particularly indigenous hosts, remain in the minority and though there may be no shortage of case studies on tourism impacts “we have yet to develop models or analytical frameworks that could help us predict the conditions under which locals experience tourism” (Stronza 2001:263). So, too, we lack perspectives from anthropology on wildlife tourism issues.



community are increasingly being heard and the applicability of traditional ethnocentric theories diminishes.

P. Burns (1999:cover) proclaims anthropology as the “window through which tourism dynamics may be properly analysed and evaluated.” There are certainly other “proper” windows, and I do not believe that anthropology alone should theorise about tourism. However, anthropology and tourism, as a combined field of knowledge, have obvious synergy (P. Burns 1999:72). Tourism has become a set of global activities crossing many cultures, and in doing this has forced itself into the traditional domain of anthropological study.

The challenge for anthropology is not to shy away from tourism as a legitimate area of research (as appears to be the case with many conservative faculties of anthropology, at least in Australia) but to ... help us better understand the complexities of the tourism system (Sofield 2000:11).

It is not just suitable for anthropology to study tourism. It is necessary. In fact, if anthropologists persist in avoiding the study of tourism (Figure 4.1) they are in danger of being pushed out of areas that traditionally belong to their discipline.<sup>51</sup> Anthropologists may think of ‘culture’ and ‘indigenous people’ as their academic territory, but they have been losing ground and need to act quickly if they are to reclaim their pre-eminence in this field. For this reason, Ahmed and Shore (1995) call for tourism to be high on the anthropological agenda.

Tourism is essentially an applied topic. It involves real people in real situations. Anthropology, like other social science disciplines, needs to become more applied to

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<sup>51</sup> For example, in a 1999 publication on tourism and culture (Robinson and Boniface 1999), just two of the thirteen contributors are anthropologists. A geographer has written on ‘partnerships involving Indigenous Peoples in the management of heritage sites’ (Wall 1999).

satisfy the needs of tourism. It needs to become more applied both in its theoretical orientation and its practical reality (Chambers 1997). Gardner and Lewis (1996:158-160) discuss the application of anthropological methodology, skills and expertise in the development context, arguing for a place for anthropologists to “work within” the large industries that impact on the lives of indigenous people. Anthropology needs to meet this challenge in the tourism arena, as it has done with the wealth of work on Native Title and Land Rights, for example. There is a need to operate competently and effectively in the tourism arena, and not hide behind past notions of avoidance and the theoretical jargon that isolates anthropologists from potential practical intervention.

According to Nash (1995:179), “one can still count the number of anthropologically oriented scholars with a serious interest in tourism on the fingers of one's hands.” Hopefully the situation, a decade on, is not so dire. The engagement of anthropology with tourism does seem to be improving. We are now seeing anthropology journals, and anthropologists, publishing outside their traditionally conservative fields and topics.<sup>52</sup>

The future challenge for anthropology is to increase its contribution, to expand its analytical work on tourism. As the practice of tourism becomes more focussed on the range of stakeholders it encompasses, not just as objects or commodities but as active participants, the demand grows for anthropology to apply its specialised knowledge and generate new theoretical frameworks. In the context of wildlife tourism, such application can assist not only the tourists and managers, but also the

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<sup>52</sup> See, for example, Burns (2004b, 2006), Burns and Howard (2003), Nash (2000), and Peace (2001, 2002).

wildlife and other members of the tourism community that comprise the whole tourism system.

Ultimately, anthropology is about people. So is tourism and so is environmental science. Anthropologists are both tourism participants and observers, whether they like it or not (Nash 1995:175). In anthropology, the wide range of possibilities for the study of tourism and environmental issues are only just being realised. It is an exciting and challenging time. It is also an important one, as anthropology, tourism and environmental science need to be engaged correctly for the future of each area.

This chapter has established anthropological worth in the field of tourism and environmental science, and expressed a desire for anthropology to engage with the field in a necessarily interdisciplinary way. As anthropologists start to recognise the relevance and importance of their role in expanding fields of academic inquiry, it becomes possible for them to embrace a more interdisciplinary stance. From this standpoint they are ready to make significant contributions to fields such as wildlife tourism. Combining anthropology, tourism and environmental science, although perhaps obvious as an academic pursuit, is very new, with work recently done on this in the Australian context by Burns and Howard (2003), Burns and Sofield (2001), and Peace (2001, 2002), and in the international context by Burns (2004b).

Currently in Australia, anthropologists engage in environmental issues, and environmental scientists employ anthropological methods and techniques, but any collaboration and interdisciplinarity lacks structure and formal recognition in almost all contexts. As has been shown, while there may be a lot of anthropological work on environmental issues, in many cases it is done without being given an

‘Environmental Anthropology’ label. I would like to see the field gain more structure, increase its interdisciplinary collaboration and consequently increase sharing of resources in both teaching and research. I include teaching here because I believe educators have a responsibility to promote an approach to environmental studies that acknowledges, for example, the differing views and epistemologies on the environment held by different people.

Environmental anthropology is an exciting, ever-expanding field with which to be involved. The prospect of interdisciplinary communication to better understand the environment and the ways humans relate to it is fast approaching. Environmental anthropology has evolved over the past decades, with many conflicting theories along the way. We are constantly fine tuning the way in which we study the interactions between humans and their environment. Cultural ecology transformed the manner in which subsistence activities and the cultural features influenced by them are considered and studied. Studies in the field of environmental anthropology may be useful in changing human behaviour to prevent or solve environmental problems in the future.

Townsend (2000:vii) articulates a “growing conviction that ... anthropology has both an appropriate degree of humility and a broad enough vision to address the environmental mess that we humans have made.” Anthropology can not do this alone however, which is why I have argued for it to contribute to an interdisciplinary approach to addressing such problems.

As has been demonstrated throughout this chapter, anthropology offers not just a suitable perspective for the study of environmental issues, best done through the

subfield of environmental anthropology. Such a perspective is necessary. Anthropology is fundamentally about people, and so is the environment. Most environmental problems are ones people created, and obviously it is the responsibility of people to fix them.

Anthropology has a critical role to play not only in contributing to our understanding of the human impact on the physical and biotic environment but also in showing how the environment is constructed, represented, claimed, and contested (Brosius 1999:277).

Wildlife tourism is one area in which anthropology's growing experience and expertise in the fields of tourism and environmental science can be applied. Before we can examine this, in the context of the case studies employed in this thesis, we need to establish the role and importance of the key stakeholders in wildlife tourism; those I will call "wildlife tourism's community."

## SECTION TWO: UNDERSTANDING THE LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL CONCEPTS

### CHAPTER FIVE

#### **The Wildlife Tourism Community<sup>1</sup>**

##### **5.0 Introduction**

Wildlife tourism was defined in the introduction as a sub-set of nature-based tourism distinguished by its focus on wildlife as the tourist attracting resource, and this definition was refined in Chapter Four (see Figures 4.6 and 4.7). The growth and popularity of different forms of wildlife tourism (Higginbottom 2004) engage and affect both people and wildlife in a variety of ways. The success, and very existence, of wildlife tourism depend on a viable resource (wildlife), an interested market (tourists and visitors), accommodating locals (residents and others), and effective management (tourism operators and government agencies). Wildlife tourism activities have many potential impacts on these various stakeholders, and the stakeholders impact on wildlife tourism activities. Any increase in wildlife tourism is likely to be accompanied by a growth in the number of people affected by it, and thus a challenge for the wildlife tourism industry is to maximise its cultural,

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<sup>1</sup> Parts of this chapter have been previously published as Burns (2004b).

economic, social and environmental benefits while minimising any adverse effects. To achieve this, in the context of environmental management, Suchet (2001:132) argues for the need to understand the aspirations of all stakeholders.

This chapter examines the wildlife tourism stakeholders, the groups of people who are crucial to understanding wildlife tourism interactions, in a global context. These are collectively referred to as the wildlife tourism community. The chapter begins with an exploration of the contested nature of the label ‘community’, to understand what it is and how it has been used as well as how it has been interpreted by anthropology. The chapter then explores some of the relationships between the stakeholders who constitute the wildlife tourism community. Following this, I define wildlife tourism’s community and how this concept is used throughout the thesis. Of particular interest is the degree and type of involvement of hosts (as one group of stakeholders) in wildlife tourism, and how different stakeholder attitudes and values shape both the nature of wildlife tourism and the ultimate sustainability of the wildlife tourism product. Examples drawn from a range of international cases illustrate some of the barriers to effective stakeholder participation in planning, designing and managing sustainable wildlife tourism, and assist with identifying key costs and benefits. Solutions posed suggest possible ways forward for positive stakeholder relationships within the wildlife tourism community.

## **5.1 ‘Community’ – What does it mean?**

The term ‘community’ has been the subject of very long, and extensively varied, literary use. While providing a central concept in the social sciences (Steiner 2002:58), it is a powerful idea that has been grossly misused and overused (Ife and

Tesoriero 2006:xii). Community can mean different things to different disciplines (*e.g.*, Steiner 2002:61), and is by no means a new concept. Plato and Aristotle, for example, posed theories for ideal societies and ideal community design (Steiner 2002:69), but their understanding of community was undoubtedly very different from the many ways in which it is used today. Use of the term has broadened over time and, while much has been written about it, community remains inconsistently and ambiguously used. In fact, it seems that the more it is theorised the more hazy its use becomes. Many authors have recognised that a definition of community is highly problematic because it is rarely defined by those using it (Beeton 2006:4) and the definitions that have been proposed have little in common (Bell and Newby 1971, Ife and Tesoriero 2006:96). Current discourse trends suggest this ambiguity is not going to change in the near future,<sup>2</sup> and it is beyond the scope of this thesis to change it here. Nevertheless it is important to understand how the term is used throughout this thesis, and therefore beneficial to allocate time to such a discussion.

Community is derived from the Latin *communitas* (Beeton 2006:4) and its sharing of a common root with the word communication is highlighted by some authors (cited in Steiner 2002:57) when attempting a definition. Steiner (2002:74), for example, notes that despite the multiple forms communities take across landscapes they “always involve both sharing and communication.” Thus, these can be viewed as necessary components in attempting to understand the term.

While a community can be defined as “an association of interacting people” (Steiner 2002:57), it encompasses much more than this. It includes not only people but also both places and processes (Steiner 2002:57). As such, a community is “both a

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<sup>2</sup> This situation exists despite calls for change, for example by Steiner (2002:59) who asserts the need for theories that address both our surroundings and our interactions within those surroundings.



physical phenomenon and a social process” (Steiner 2002:58). But does this apply to all communities? A cyber-space, or internet, community may not appear to occupy a shared physical space yet for this association of interacting people there is an illusion of physical place, of something spatially shared.<sup>3</sup> This is fundamental to community that is about “people sharing space” (Steiner 2002:74).

There can be no doubt that “many individuals and a variety of physical elements compose communities” (Steiner 2002:68), but it is also much more than this. Selznick (in Steiner 2002:74) describes the basic elements of community as a “complex set of interacting variables” that include “historicity, identity, mutuality, plurality, autonomy, participation and integration.”

Beeton (2006) asserts that community is a dialogic concept, interpreted within a particular context. “In summary, a community is an amalgamation of living things that share an environment” (p6). In this sense, community describes the inhabitants of a place, an ethnic grouping, and persons who share a sense of belonging, common interests, values and/or aspirations. Communities can be constructed or organic (p2); they can also overlap and multiple communities can be interdependent.

Ife and Tesoriero (2006:96) define community as a form of social organisation with five related characteristics.<sup>4</sup> The first characteristic stipulates that communities are small enough in scale to allow for genuine empowerment; however, Ife and Tesoriero then contradict themselves by adding the clause that this does not rule out

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<sup>3</sup> Ife (2002:83) refers to this as a “virtual community” while arguing that to “remove face-to-face personal interaction from the concept of community ... can result in ... less commitment to working towards a more sustainable environment.”

<sup>4</sup> For other factors and sets of characteristics used to define community see Beeton (2006:11), Graves (1992), and McMillan and Chavis (1996).

particularly larger groups such as “the Australian community” (p96).<sup>5</sup> Secondly, being a member of a community incorporates a sense of belonging, which in turn leads to sense of shared identity within a group (p97). Third is community obligation: the notion that there are rights and responsibilities of membership within such a group as well as a requirement of active participation (p97). Fourthly, Ife and Tesoriero (p97) remind us of Tonnies’ (1955) description of societal change from *Gemeinschaft*, where people interacted with a relatively small number of others, to *Gesellschaft*, in which interactions take place with many more people (p18). The final defining characteristic is culture, the shared elements of each community that make it unique (Ife and Tesoriero 2006:97-98).

This model by Ife and Tesoriero (2006) would seem a very emic one. Characteristics, such as a sense of belonging and identity, may be experienced by some members of the community but are not necessarily experienced or recognised by others; such as wildlife tourism operators, when interacting with other community members. From an emic perspective the characteristics are no doubt important ones. However, the model presents something of an ideal, consistent with Ife and Tesoriero’s (2006) social justice framework, rather than a reflection of how the term is always used in practice.

Most definitions of community are very broad-based, making it difficult to draw boundaries for inclusive-ness and exclusive-ness. Where does one end and another begin? Communities may be spatially divided; for example, by ethnicity or economics (Steiner 2002:64). But this is not the only division possible. So called

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<sup>5</sup> An emphasis on smallness of scale, although common, is not universally held of communities. Anderson (2006), for example, proposes nations as communities of a particularly horizontal kind that can be constituted by imagined rather than face-to-face relationships. Agrawal and Gibson (1999:635) also subscribe to the view held by Anderson that “all communities are imagined communities”, and Chavez (1994) tests this concept in an ethnography on United States immigrants.

“communities of interest”, that is, groups with shared interests such as religion, occupation, or hobbies, tend to be non-spatial (Beeton 2006:6, Frank and Smith 2006:8, Steiner 2002:64).

Ife and Tesoriero (2006:98-99) distinguish between geographical and functional communities. A geographical community is, as the name would suggest, based on locality and is perhaps the most common way the term is used today (Beeton 2006:5). However, not all communities need to be defined in this physical or spatial way (Frank and Smith 2006:8). A functional community, for example, is based on some other common element providing a sense of identity. In this regard, it is similar to a community of interest described above. Ife and Tesoriero (2006) argue that the non-locality based communities have become more possible as a result of communication technologies (specifically the internet) and personal mobility that allow for interaction between community members in different physical locations. A question worthy of examination is whether, if moving from geographically defined communities toward functionally defined ones, characteristics such as belonging are lost or diffused? If so, does this affect cohesion and sustainability?

A further important characteristic of communities is that they are, practically by definition, interactive (Steiner 2002:66) and are constructed based on these interactions. While such interaction may be a defining feature it does not provide us with a static picture of a community. In fact, communities also “change as a result of interactions” (Steiner 2002:67), as shown in examples later in this thesis. In the wildlife tourism context, interactions with tourists and wildlife can change a community. In the face of change, “some communities adapt better than

others” (Steiner 2002:69) and factors that affect the ability to adapt will be examined later.

Individuals can freely move in and out of, at least some, communities. To become accepted as a local by others in some geographical communities, depending on the context, can take a long time. Yet the newcomer may still function as part of the community in reality long before accepted local status is reached.

Technology, particularly that pertaining to communication and mobility, has facilitated this freedom of movement. It is possible to join an action group on the web, for example, that may operate as a functional community existing only for the purpose of a specific goal and disperse when that it achieved.<sup>6</sup> It is also possible to physically move, but remain in the same community. As Steiner (2002:74) notes, “we can move from one physical community to another and remain a part of a social network.” With the advent of such freedom of movement, both physically and metaphysically, the membership borders of, at least some, communities are not as tightly fixed or drawn as they once were; for example, at the times Plato and Aristotle were writing.

Before leaving this overview of community to discover how anthropologists engage with the term, there is a final point that needs clarification. The feature of community that frequently receives the greatest attention in its construction as a

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<sup>6</sup> An example is the group of people and organisations who successfully launched and ran the ‘Save Ningaloo Reef Campaign’ ([www.SaveNingalooReef.org](http://www.SaveNingalooReef.org)) from 2001-2005 protesting against a proposed inland marina resort development at Maud’s Landing on the boundary of the Ningaloo Marine Park north of Coral Bay, in Western Australia. The coalition behind the campaign included the Conservation Council of WA, the Australian Marine Conservation Society, the World Wildlife Fund, and the Australian Wildlife Conservancy.

social artefact is its homogenous composition (Agrawal and Gibson 1999:634).<sup>7</sup> This is borne out in the five shared characteristics posed earlier by Ife and Tesoriero (2006). “The notion that a community is homogenous meshes well with beliefs about its spatial boundaries” (Agrawal and Gibson 1999:634). However, despite images displayed by some (*e.g.*, Benjamin 1968:261, 264), communities are not homogenous and this is increasingly being recognised in the literature. Kelly and Kaplan (2001:30), for example, speak out “against the homogenous, empty communities in contemporary social theory” and Steiner (2002:69), discussing the challenges of pluralism, describes “a community of diverse communities.” Holden (2005:153) reminds us that the host community is not homogenous in the context of tourism. Thus, like the wider community discussed above, an important characteristic of the wildlife tourism community is that while its constituent groups of stakeholders and individuals share “something in common” (Beeton 2006:6), they are rarely homogenous and it does not constitute a unified whole (Ashley and Roe 1998:7).

The emphasis on community holism may have stemmed from Tonnies’ (1955) view of community as an organic whole and his focus on community homogeneity rather than heterogeneity. This emphasis was copied by others and may be the source of community historically being considered in this way; though, as identified earlier, community was discussed by influential philosophers (such as Plato and Aristotle) long before Tonnies.

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<sup>7</sup> Arun Agrawal and Clark Gibson have written extensively on the role of community in natural resource conservation. See, for example, Agrawal (2005), Agrawal and Chhatre (2006), Agrawal and Gibson (1999, 2001), Gibson and Marks (1995).

Recent authors acknowledge that “often communities are split into various factions based on a complex interplay of class, gender and ethnic factors, and certain families or individuals are likely to lay claim to privileges because of their apparent status” (Scheyvens 2002:9). Thus, diversity exists both within and among communities (Steiner 2002:68), and divergent interests exist amongst the various stakeholder groups, or even individuals, within a community (Agrawal and Gibson 1999, Burns and Howard 2003, Burns and Sofield 2001). Recognition of this is essential for tourism planners, developers, and managers.

Bearing this in mind, throughout this thesis when comment is made on community support, or otherwise, it is important to recognise that variations in level of support may exist within the same community (Ap and Crompton 1993, Jurowski *et. al.* 1997, Mason and Cheyne 2000, Taylor and Davis 1997).<sup>8</sup> Also, too much diversity can be a bad thing. Steiner (2002:67) notes that “Integrated communities seem more healthy than ones where there are unnecessary divisions.” Thus, if the divisions are too extensive the essential feature of necessary commonality can be broken down such that a discernible community no longer exists. This begs the question of where the line can be drawn between homogeneity and heterogeneity, and of course no simple answer exists. All human groups are stratified to some extent or other yet, as Agrawal and Gibson (1999:365) note, “few studies ...wrestle with the difficulty of operationalizing what social homogeneity might be.”<sup>9</sup>

This exploration of the term ‘community’ leaves us with a broad idea of the types of things it can encompass, as well as its complexity and ambiguity. It is used to

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<sup>8</sup> Guijt and Shah (1998) clarify this point clearly in their text aptly titled “The Myth of Community”.

<sup>9</sup> Taylor (1982), for example, has undertaken an extensive survey of stratification and hierarchy within supposedly egalitarian communities.

distinguish one group of individuals from another based on a sharing of something; be it communication, interest, function, geography, interaction or a combination of these. On its own, as it is commonly misused, the term is fluid enough as to be almost meaningless. Consequently, I argue that it needs to be combined with some other descriptive label before it can be understood. This will be discussed further in section 5.2, in the description of the wildlife tourism community. Before then, however, I turn to a brief examination of how the term has been used by anthropologists.

### **5.1.1 Anthropology and Community<sup>10</sup>**

For anthropology, which has a long professed goal of a comparative and holistic analysis of human cultures and societies, the concept of community is of crucial importance; yet the use and understanding of this term has altered significantly over time. Older anthropological dictionaries, for example, either fail to define community (Davies 1972) or emphasise only its relationship to smallness of scale (Winick 1958:126). Winick (1958) echoes the sentiments of anthropology in the 1950s and 1960s when small-scale, also referred to as kin-based or traditional, non-Western societies made up the majority of anthropological discourse. At this time, the community term belonged to sociology more than anthropology; anthropology preferring terms such as band and tribe to describe groups based on political or economic organisation within a society.

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<sup>10</sup> Some of the material in this section was previously presented as part of a co-authored conference paper at CAUTHE in February 2002 (Macbeth *et al.* 2002). This work remains unpublished.

As anthropology extended its study to include peasants<sup>11</sup> the term community became more widely used (see, for example, Redfield 1960, Wolf 1955). This is reflected in more recent dictionaries (*e.g.*, Hunter and Witten 1976:84, Seymour-Smith 1986:46) where community is associated with discourse on peasants, and community study defined as a mode of anthropological analysis of peasantry. However, the use of this term has changed such that even these definitions are outdated.<sup>12</sup>

There is clearly a connection between community and local (as well as locality) in the majority of recent anthropological work.<sup>13</sup> Referring to the critique of temporal premises in anthropology in Fabian's (1983) *Time and the Other*, Kelly and Kaplan (2001) suggest that the term local, or local people, has supplanted the use of the Other in anthropological musings:

These days, one more often hears about the 'local' than 'the Other.' One hears even about 'local people', people awkwardly, implicitly contrasted with some other kind of people, usually unnamed, but obviously including the writer and reader (Kelly and Kaplan 2001:50).

For anthropology then, in looking outside itself, the study of others has transformed into a study of "communities of locals" (Kelly and Kaplan 2001:55).

Anthropologists commonly use community to define the boundary of their study (*e.g.*, Peck and Lepie 1989), and in recognition of this Cohen (1985:9) argues for a symbolic definition of community. Cohen notes scholarly use of the word as an

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<sup>11</sup> Recognition of the applicability of the study of peasants to anthropology is an area still neglected in many introductory texts; see, for example, Keesing and Strathern (1998) and Lavenda and Schultz (2002).

<sup>12</sup> For example, Wilson and Peterson's (2002) article on "the anthropology of online communities" is not about peasants or indigenous minorities. Neither is "Re-placing the space of community" (Olsen 2005) or "Doing Health Anthropology: research methods for community assessment and change" (Kiefer 2006). In each of these articles, the community is conceptualised in different ways.

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, Jensen (2004) and Quinlan *et al.* (2005).



attempt to find a study boundary, and its most frequent usage is for a group of people with something in common that serves to distinguish them from others.

As a “boundary-expressing symbol” (Cohen 1985:15) used by anthropologists, community may constitute a geographical or structural boundary, but is more often a cultural one where the emphasis is on shared identity (Martin 1972, Mishra and Preston 1978). It is also used to encompass the people associated with a certain object of study, event or experience.<sup>14</sup>

Like many other writers, anthropologists have a tendency to take the notion of community for granted. Even when appearing to focus on community it is often the case that little attempt is made to define this term or even discuss it (*e.g.*, Sharp and Hanks 1978).<sup>15</sup> Goodenough (1951) falls into this group: promising a book on *Property, Kin and Community on Truk*, he devotes 30 pages to property and 100 to kin yet only two to community. Despite this, he may be credited with one of the earliest anthropological attempts to work with this term in a manner that supports both locality and functionality boundaries (Goodenough 1951:147).

It is also common for anthropologists to use community and society almost interchangeably (*e.g.*, Crick 1994:115), despite Tonnies’ (1955) attempts to distinguish between the two. Nonetheless, anthropology has maintained a broad

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<sup>14</sup> For example, in “Romancing Resistance and Resisting Romance: Ethnography and the construction of power in the Filipina domestic worker community in Hong Kong” (Groves and Chang 1999), the object of study is defined as a community because of their shared experience of being Filipina Domestic Workers. Here community is used to represent both a functional (cultural, or ethnic) boundary (Filipina), and a geographical boundary (Hong Kong).

<sup>15</sup> For example, in *A Sentimental Economy: Commodity and community in Rural Ireland*, Salazar (1996) makes no mention of community until Chapter 7 when distinction is made between a ‘farming community’ and a ‘moral community’; thus, still leaving the unattached use of community undefined. Similarly Meillassoux (1981) takes pains to describe ‘the domestic community’, again leaving community ambiguous.

interest in the term and the way it is used, engaging with new types of communities and new contexts in which they arise (see, for example, Wilson and Peterson 2002).

How to study community has been an issue of some importance in social theory for many years, and is an issue that needs to be re-examined in the tourism context. Anthropological writings on community in the context of tourism have to date been minimal,<sup>16</sup> and writings on community in the context of wildlife tourism are even more sparse. Consequently, this thesis provides a much needed addition to the literature.

## **5.2 Wildlife Tourism's Community**

From this discussion so far it is clear that 'community' on its own is a rather meaningless word. To understand the term fully it must be coupled with something that describes at least the context in which it is being applied; such as 'indigenous community', 'local community' and so on. My intention in this section is to explain what I mean by 'community' when it is coupled with 'wildlife tourism'. The two terms have obvious synergy, as will be discussed; however, it seems that "The concept of community is rarely defined or carefully examined by those concerned with resource use and management" (Agrawal and Gibson 1999:629).

Without commencing what could be a very lengthy discussion on historical and contemporary relationships between human groups and nature,<sup>17</sup> some clear links can be drawn between the types of communities discussed above and the wildlife tourism that is the focus of this thesis. For example, Patterson claims that "Few

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<sup>16</sup> For some notable exceptions see, for example, Cole (2007), Dahles (2003), Freitag (1996), Joseph and Kavoori (2001), Pi-Sunyer (1989), and Shunnaq *et al.* (2007).

<sup>17</sup> For a comprehensive early anthropological discussion on this see Leeds and Vayda (eds) (1965).

definitions of community exist that do not contain nature as central to the idea of community; the very spiritual existence of a stable, psychologically secure community rests on its sense of dwelling in an Arcadian world” (cited in Steiner 2002:67). The recognition of community as central to renewable resource management literature (*e.g.*, Agrawal and Gibson 1999, 2001) appears to be increasing, and it seems logical then that it is only a matter of time before this filters through to wildlife tourism literature, which is (at least theoretically) in its infancy.

As previously demonstrated, it is often easier to describe who the community is not, rather than who they are. This observation applies to wildlife tourism’s community. An anthropological perspective on a wildlife tourism community may see it as either functional or geographical, or both. Regardless, it includes many different stakeholder groups; such as, but not only, visitors and tourists, tourism facility (for example, hotel and tour) owners and operators, local residents in the destination area and wildlife managers.<sup>18</sup>

Taking a broad view, the wildlife tourism community encompasses all stakeholders in any wildlife tourism venture, which is how it is conceived of throughout this thesis. A social science perspective on community would traditionally exclude wildlife as a stakeholder group and component of the community; however, Beeton’s earlier definition of community as “an amalgamation of living things that share an environment” (2006:6) does not specify that humans alone can occupy a community. Thus, I have retained wildlife in my definition of a wildlife tourism community to emphasise their importance as a key component of this type of tourism experience.

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<sup>18</sup> Consequently, my use of the term ‘wildlife tourism community’ is applied similarly to ‘wildlife tourism stakeholders’ defined by Newsome, Dowling and Moore (2005:115). For a table showing examples of these stakeholders and their relationship to wildlife tourism see Newsome, Dowling and Moore (2005:117). For an example of how to use ‘decision trees’ to identify tourism stakeholders see Byrd and Gustke (2007).

Although literature on community has long been an essential part of the general tourism discourse (e.g., Murphy 1985, Pearce, Moscardo and Ross 1996), literature focusing specifically on members of the wildlife tourism community is minimal.<sup>19</sup> Given this youthful stage in the field's discourse, it becomes not just informative but also imperative to draw on literature from the wider field of tourism, while not losing sight of the important differences of wildlife tourism. Some texts especially relevant to this enquiry include Beeton (2006), Pearce, Moscardo and Ross (1996), Richards and Hall (2000), Scheyvens (2002), and Sofield (2003). While drawing from this wider literature it is important to recognise that "all forms of tourism are not the same", and therefore wildlife tourism "should not be developed the same, or marketed the same" (Fennell and Dowling 2003:331) as other forms. Beeton asserts that "the definitive driver of community is that all individual subjects in the mix have something in common" (2006:6). Thus, in the case of the wildlife tourism community, their shared something in common is their interest in wildlife tourism and this becomes the defining characteristic.

### **5.3 The Host Community in Wildlife Tourism**

Valene Smith was probably the first to use the term 'host' in connection with tourism and anthropology when she first edited *Hosts and Guests* (1977a).<sup>20</sup> However, the value of these two terms are dubious and can be questioned, not just because "they tend to presuppose a social reciprocity between two equals when in fact the host-

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<sup>19</sup> Some exceptions include Ashley and Roe's (1998) development agency perspective; Burns's (2004b) coverage of the host community in wildlife tourism, Burns and Sofield's (2001) survey of host involvement with Australian wildlife tourism, Muloin, Zeppel and Higginbottom's (2001) assessment of indigenous wildlife tourism in Australia, Mvula's (2001) report on a Zambian National Park, and Newsome, Dowling and Moore's chapter on wildlife tourism stakeholders (2005).

<sup>20</sup> A second edition of this edited book, with the same title, was published in 1989. Smith, co-editing with Brent, revisited the topic in 2001 with a publication entitled *Hosts and Guests Revisited: Tourism issues of the 21st Century*.

guest relationship is rarely one of equivalence” (Burns 1996:13). As Crick notes, “one may not find ... [in tourism] ... anything like ‘customary hospitality’ or any of the norms which apply in cultures between ‘hosts’ and ‘guests’” (1988:60). In addition, host implies a passive role, while guest implies invitation, neither of which may be the case (Burns 1996). Using only these two terms poses them as the only two stakeholders in the tourism system, which is another fallacy. Nevertheless, the term ‘host’ has stuck and continues to be used widely in the literature today.

I initially approached this research with the intention of exploring the role of the host community in the sustainability of wildlife tourism in Australia. Along the way, the thesis changed. The term ‘host community’ is commonly presented in tourism literature as synonymous with ‘residents’, ‘locals’,<sup>21</sup> ‘public’ or ‘citizens.’ Whilst the people who comprise these stakeholder groups are obviously a vital component of the overall wildlife tourism community, my case studies demonstrated that it was not sufficient to focus on this narrow definition of hosts alone in attempting to understand sustainability and other key issues, such as interactions, in wildlife tourism. Consequently, the thesis proposes a wider definition and focusses on a broader picture of which hosts are an important part. Given their importance and vitality, this section of the chapter describes the hosts: who the label includes, how and why they are frequently overlooked, and ways they can be involved in wildlife tourism.

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<sup>21</sup> See, for example, Newsome, Dowling and Moore (2005:115) who write about a “local host community.”

For the purpose of this thesis, the host community refers to all stakeholder groups supplying wildlife tourism in a particular region.<sup>22</sup> Thus, the host community is seen as comprised of many stakeholder groups and individuals at the supply end of tourism; including not only the wildlife, residents, indigenous people and others living locally to the attraction but also government policy makers, non-government organizations (NGOs), and tourism operators.<sup>23</sup> Here the locality (geographical region) is an essential criterion because identifying the host community as geographically located people helps to distinguish them from other stakeholders; however, this alone is not sufficient. The host community also includes interested parties (the functional community and community of interest). Thus, it includes local people involved either directly or indirectly with wildlife tourism ventures and encompasses those affected by, as well as those who identify as having an interest in, the venture (Burns and Sofield 2001:2).

People engaging in activities as visitors and tourists are primarily users rather than suppliers of wildlife tourism, either of which could include them as part of a community of interest. At the time of interaction with the wildlife tourism both tourists and visitors are within the locality, and therefore could also be seen as part of a geographical community. But the key here is their membership as part of a community not specifically the hosts. That is, while they may be part of the wildlife

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<sup>22</sup> The approach of separating of users and suppliers in determining the host community is not shared by all authors (e.g., Bright and Pierce 2002). Roe et al (2000:11), for example, defining community for the purpose of discussing community-based wildlife management say it “represents users of a resource rather than a homogenous resident unit.” However, Roe *et al.* (2000) mainly focus on indigenous people who are often subsistence users of wildlife as a resource. This provides a further example of community being defined to fit the purpose of a particular study.

<sup>23</sup> A more detailed examination of the engagement of government and larger scale tourism businesses, especially those not locally owned or operated, with wildlife tourism can be found in Beeton (2004).

tourism community, I am not including them in the part that constitutes the hosts of wildlife tourism.

Local people, including residents and indigenous groups, living in or adjacent to wildlife tourism destinations are included in my definition of a host community (as a sub-section of the overall wildlife tourism community) because, even though their involvement with or contribution to the wildlife tourism may be minimal (as will be discussed in following sections), they are still primarily suppliers rather than users of the wildlife tourism venture.<sup>24</sup>

Residents are the people living in the wildlife tourism destination, such as on Fraser Island in Queensland (Burns and Howard 2003), Phillip Island in Victoria (Harris 2002), or in a Ugandan National Park (Lepp 2002). Locals may be residents, but 'local' also includes those living near the boundaries of the tourism destination. The residents of Rockingham, the mainland area adjacent to Penguin Island in Western Australia, are an example of this group. Other authors have used different terminology for the same groups, as mentioned previously. Steiner (2002:60), for example, describes "neighbourhood" as "a specific type of community, defined by vicinity" in which people live near each other in a particular locality.

In this thesis the host community also includes other stakeholders with a vested interest in the wildlife tourism resources and/or destination and thus is not always comprised exclusively of locals and residents, although locality remains an essential component. The 'Friends of Lancelin Island' group, established for the purpose of

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<sup>24</sup> Of course, it is possible for them to be both suppliers and users. Both Penguin Island and Fraser Island receive visitors from the nearby mainland who engage in tourism activities while on the islands, and in doing so fit into both categories. However, as the majority of wildlife tourism activities for these people take place off the islands in roles not as tourists or visitors I have included them first and foremost as hosts.

preserving and protecting the flora and fauna of a small off-shore island in Western Australia (Burns and Sofield 2001:22-26) provide an example of one such group. Many members live in the coastal town of Lancelin, the town nearest to Lancelin Island, but the town has a small permanent and large semi-permanent population because of the seasonally attracting features of fishing, recreation and sporting competitions. Consequently, although not all members of the 'Friends of ..' group are always in the locality, some are and many are there for at least some part of the year and therefore remain a part (in this case an active and vocal part) of the host community.

Different stakeholder groups within the host community sometimes join together to form an amalgamated group with a common goal. The 'Save Ningaloo Campaign', run by the Western Australian Conservation Council in association with larger organisations such as The Wilderness Society and WWF, is an example. This group, spearheaded by prominent non-residents such as the Australian author Tim Winton, successfully lobbied government to prevent development of tourism infrastructure centred on whale shark tourism (Australian Marine Conservation Society 2003). In such cases, although this functional community share interest in a particular locality the vast majority do not live in or even near the wildlife tourism destination.

Wildlife tourism, often located in rural rather than urban areas, may be of particular relevance to indigenous members of the host community. Indigenous people may be both residents and locals in a wildlife tourism setting, or part of a wider community of interest. In some cases, indigenous issues in wildlife tourism are similar to those of other stakeholder groups, although there may be different ramifications for their



livelihood and standard of living.<sup>25</sup> Throughout this thesis indigenous people are treated as one of the stakeholder groups that constitute the host community and not singled out for special attention. The limitations of this treatment are recognised. Davies and Young (1996:156), for example, argue that indigenous peoples in Australia should not be considered “just another interest group” or stakeholder when, in fact, they occupy a unique place in shaping the nation’s cultural identity. Langton (2003:88) also makes the point that indigenous people are more than “mere stakeholders” and thus should be consulted with more importance than “other settler-state stakeholders.” The same argument applies for indigenous people in other countries; however, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to focus separately on indigenous people.

Although a “fundamental component of any tourism system” (Burns and Sofield 2001:i), the host community is frequently overlooked in the wildlife tourism literature (*e.g.*, MacLellan 1999, Matt and Aumiller 2002),<sup>26</sup> and it seems likely that this is often paralleled in practice. The importance of recognition of a host community is exemplified when we consider that few wildlife tourism destinations exist without repercussions for a host community.<sup>27</sup>

Members of the host community may be involved directly or indirectly with wildlife tourism, or not involved at all. The type of involvement engaged in depends on the

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<sup>25</sup> For further information on indigenous people and general tourism issues see Butler and Hinch (1996), and Johnston (2003).

<sup>26</sup> MacLellan (1999), for example, examines the potential of wildlife tourism as a sustainable form of tourism development in Scotland focusing on visitor expectations and an economic rationale, with no mention of the host community.

<sup>27</sup> Antarctica may be one of few exceptions; however, it is a unique wildlife tourism destination for many reasons. Fennell and Dowling (2003:338) propose that “the region is perhaps the best managed site in the world”, largely due to its independent political status and heavy reliance on industry self-regulation. However, the assertion that “this model has application in other world regions” (p338) should be treated with caution owing to the highly unusual circumstances of lack of residents, nearby locals and indigenous people at this destination. Thus, in the case of Antarctica, any host community is non-residential and solely part of a geographically distanced community of interest.

context of the wildlife tourism (Burns and Sofield 2001), as well as the stakeholder group being considered in the wider definition of 'hosts', but is frequently restricted by factors that also apply to other forms of tourism. Similarly, host involvement may take place at different stages in the development of a wildlife tourism facility and take different forms in those stages depending on differences between the stakeholder groups.

Writing about wildlife tourism in the South Luangwa National Park, Zambia, Mvula (2001:402-403) cites the following factors that influence host exclusion from direct involvement in the tourism industry:

- Lack of education/skills/training
- Limited employment opportunities
- Lack of capital
- Lack of tourists, or access to them
- Lack of awareness of benefits from tourism for local communities

To this list, for alternative wildlife tourism settings, the following could be added:

- Lack of interest in involvement; that is, the assumption should not be made that all hosts desire involvement with the tourism industry
  - Lack of information, power and resources in relation to other stakeholders
- (Scheyvens 2002:9)

Previous negative experiences with tourism that motivate hosts to avoid direct involvement (Scheyvens 2002:10).

For residents and other locals, direct involvement may take the form of paid employees, managers, owners and operators, or unpaid volunteers. As employees in wildlife tourism, indigenous people and nearby residents frequently work as guides

(Burns 2004b, 2006, Burns and Sofield 2001:19, Shackley 1996:83) in recognition of their local knowledge. Burns and Sofield (2001) also found that a large percentage of local involvement in Australian wildlife tourism takes place on a voluntary basis,<sup>28</sup> as is the case on Penguin Island.

Hosts may be indirectly involved when, for example, they are recipients of distributed compensation revenue from tourism, but otherwise have no contact (*e.g.*, Adams and Infield 2003). Residents may also collect lease money from tourism operators who bring tourists onto their lands (Scheyvens 2002:10). Local residents, especially those in less developed countries, rarely initiate tourism development without input from an external source such as a local NGO, an international conservancy agency, or a private tourism operator (Scheyvens 2002:10). Such input is not always exclusively financial and the external source may be responsible for initiating the idea of tourism (*e.g.*, Burns 2003, Sofield 2003). As Mvula (2001:403-404) discovered in Zambia's South Luangwa National Park, the local people initially had little direct involvement in the development and management of tourism in the area, but later began to take some control and initiate projects - such as encouraging tourists to visit villages.<sup>29</sup>

In the wider literature the "vital role of community involvement and ownership at all stages of tourism development" (Baum 1996:149) has been stressed. It is also argued that the type of involvement host communities have can shape the benefits

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<sup>28</sup> At the Karakamia wildlife sanctuary in Western Australia, for example, unpaid local residents voluntarily work as guides, taking tourists on night 'spotlighting' walks through the conservation area developed for protecting native fauna species (Australian Wildlife Conservancy 2003).

<sup>29</sup> A similar situation existed on the island of Beqa in Fiji (where many residents were not informed of the development of the first tourist resort until construction began) when local people were employed mainly in the construction phase due to their perceived lack of skills in other types of work (Burns 1996, 2003).

and costs they experience from tourism (Ashley and Roe 1998), and may have implications for the sustainability of a wildlife tourism venture.

#### **5.4 The Relationship between Community and Sustainability**

Sustainability should be a goal for all wildlife tourism ventures (Higginbottom 2004),<sup>30</sup> and the role of all community members must be acknowledged as sustainability is dependent on support from the community. “For tourism to survive ... it needs support from the area’s residents” (Ap and Crompton 1998:120) and other key stakeholders and, for tourism to avoid causing its own destruction, sustainable tourism must be embraced as a valued concept by all stakeholders (Wahab and Pigram 1997).

Ensuring a sustainable wildlife tourism attraction requires an understanding of the interplay of elements affecting both the perception of, and support for, that tourism (Burns and Sofield 2001). For example, residents interact with tourists, managers and wildlife in the context of wildlife tourism in varying ways, and this interaction can have implications for the sustainability and long-term viability of the wildlife tourism venture.

A key to sustainability may lie in ensuring that “local communities” are economically viable (Edgell 2006:98) and keeping the benefits from tourism local (Lepp 2002:219). Such benefits must be perceived to outweigh any costs or disadvantages. One of the requirements for sustainable use of wild species, for tourism or other purposes, is that there are positive economic incentives for people

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<sup>30</sup> For discussions on sustainability and its incorporation into discourse on wildlife tourism see, for example, Burns and Sofield (2001:2), Davis, Tisdell and Hardy (2001).

living near such populations to conserve these species (Adams and Infield 2003:178, Prescott-Allen and Prescott-Allen 1996). Conservation efforts require broad public support (Callicott 2006:111) and, while economics plays an important part in acquiring this, sustainability is not ensured simply by such incentives.

The United Nations Local Agenda 21 (LA21) policy is useful to consider in this context of community and sustainability. Although LA21 did not initially name tourism, it has important ramifications for the tourism industry and for sustainability involving the local community.<sup>31</sup> Involvement can, for example, take the form of partnerships as a way of ensuring cooperative management, and such formation of partnerships is frequently linked with sustainability (*e.g.*, Bramwell and Lane 2000b, Edgell 2006:76, Fulton *et al.* 2002, Mayo 1997, Stolton and Dudley 1999). LA21 challenges “local authorities to adopt ways to involve their communities in defining their own sustainable futures” (Smith 2001:191) and suggests that sustainable development can only be achieved “through planned, democratic, cooperative means including community involvement in decisions about the environment and development” (Jackson and Morpeth 1999:3). It tells us that “tourism development strategy should protect local culture, respect local traditions and promote local ownership and management of programs and projects, so as to foster community stewardship of the natural resource base” (Smith 2001:191). The case of penguin tourism on Phillip Island in Victoria (5.4.1) provides an example of a sustainable wildlife tourism venture that benefits from the involvement and support of local people.

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<sup>31</sup> For further information on the relationship between tourism and LA21 see Jackson and Morpeth (1999, 2000).

#### **5.4.1 People and Penguins on Phillip Island**

Of the ten Little Penguin (*Eudyptula minor*) colonies that existed on Phillip Island in Victoria, Australia, at the time of European settlement in 1850s only one remains (Harris 2002:239). Visitors were first drawn to the penguins in the 1920s to watch what is now known as the nightly ‘penguin parade’ attracting large tourist numbers (520000 in 2001) (p240). The attraction was controlled by the local shire from the mid-1950s until 1981 when the Victorian state government took over and established a committee to oversee management of the area (Newman 1992).

Local people have been involved with this wildlife tourism attraction for a long time in a variety of ways. For example, the first boat trips for tourists to the island, in the late 1920s, were organised by island residents. More recently, two island residents are always on the management committee of twelve. The attraction is the island’s largest employer for residents, and tourism income is used to educate them about the wildlife-friendly care of domestic pets. Management is aided by volunteers engaged in a variety of programmes including interpretation services, weed eradication, rescuing wildlife, seed collection and propagation. In addition, a regular column in the local newspaper is designed to keep its readers informed about tourism on the island (Harris 2002, PINPBM 2000). Since 1992 the state government has been buying back houses on Phillip Island in what is “perhaps the first, and only, example in the Australian context of an instance where a (human) community has been essentially displaced for the good of a particular animal species” (Harris 2002:244).

This example supports the claim of Jurowski *et al.* (1997:3) that “the support of the local population is essential for the development, successful operation, and

sustainability of tourism.” It is likely that wildlife tourism will only be sustainable where there exists a combination of social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits for the host community (Burns and Sofield 2001:i). Before turning to an examination of the ways various community members may participate in, and thus benefit from, wildlife tourism it is necessary to have some understanding of their perceptions in terms of attitudes and values.

## **5.5 Community Perceptions of Wildlife Tourism: Attitudes and Values**

Acceptance of, and support for, wildlife tourism is likely to vary depending on the way in which interactions between the various members of the wildlife tourism community take place (Burns and Sofield 2001:ii). Some stakeholder groups seek to attract tourists to their area because of the industry’s perceived potential for improving existing social and economic conditions (Ap and Crompton 1998:124). However, previous studies (such as Burns 1996, 2003, Britton 1980, 1982a, 1987, MacCannell 1976, Turner and Ash 1975) have shown that tourism also has the potential to degrade locals perceptions of their quality of life, especially if too many tourists are attracted. Resident quality of life in relation to tourism has been well documented. The tourism literature includes several development cycle theories<sup>32</sup> derived from Doxey’s (1975) ‘irritation index’ and generally based on the concept of social carrying capacity. The premise is that resident quality of life will improve during the initial stages of a tourism development or growth but reach a carrying capacity<sup>33</sup> limit beyond which additional growth results in negative change. On this scale the concept of ‘how many is too many?’ needs to be determined at a local level

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<sup>32</sup> See, for example, Pearce, Moscardo and Ross (1996:17), and Shaw and Williams (2002:304).

<sup>33</sup> For further information on carrying capacities see Martin and Uysal (1990), and Shaw and Williams (2002:311-315).

because, as noted earlier, “for tourism to survive in an area it needs support from the area’s residents” (Ap and Crompton 1998:120).

Just as tourism has long been promoted as a tool for development, particularly for less developed countries and rural communities (Butler and Jenkins 1998, Scheyvens 2002, Weaver 1993), so too tourism has been perceived to provide jobs and income for residents (Edgell 2002:10). As mentioned above, an assumption frequently underlying the planning of tourism development is that economics is the primary factor influencing resident quality of life and consequently their support for, or opposition to, such development (Perdue, Long, Kang 1999:166). Cases such as that discussed by Burns (2003) of a tourist development in Fiji however, show that while this assumption may be prevalent in the planning stages it is not always vindicated when the development eventuates. The claim is not that the financial viability of a wildlife tourism venture lacks importance to members of the community. It may be important, but it is by no means the only consideration.<sup>34</sup>

While some issues raised by wildlife tourism are the same as those raised by other forms of tourism, some are very different. One difference relates to the pre-tourism values<sup>35</sup> that different stakeholders place on particular wildlife. Environmental philosophers customarily divide value into two main types and much of the discussion in the literature on species valuation has been framed in the context of these utilitarian (also called instrumental or extrinsic) versus intrinsic (or inherent) values (Callicott 2006:111, Fennell 2006:179).

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<sup>34</sup> For further information on economics and wildlife tourism see Davis *et al.* (2001), Johannesen and Skonhoft (2005), Tisdell and Wilson (2003, 2004). Ioannides (2003) discusses some of the myths and realities of tourism economics in host communities.

<sup>35</sup> For a discussion on values at the basis of ethical tourism discourse see Fennell (2006).



Hodgkinson (2004:30) defines values as 'concepts of the desirable' with a motivating force. This helps us to understand that values motivate and mobilise human transactions with the world of nature (Harris 1989) and can affect perceptions of, and enthusiasm for, a tourism venture. For example, if the wildlife is used as a food source, such as when the Alaskan Inupiat hunt whales (Chance 1990), then the locally assigned utilitarian value may be high. In situations where the wildlife is perceived as disruptive to local lifestyles, such as when gorillas destroy crops in Uganda (Lepp 2002) or lions prey on cattle in Kenya (Shackley 1996:92), then the anthropocentrically applied value may be negative. If the history is of little interaction between a particular stakeholder group and the wildlife, such as with the residents of Safety Bay and the penguins on Penguin Island (Burns 2006), then the value is more likely to be neutral. Very rarely, prior to the development of wildlife tourism in a region, do we find wildlife valued solely as an attraction. Thus, the success of wildlife tourism, or even its existence, may depend on changes to values placed on the attracting wildlife. Altering stakeholder views can be a major challenge for sustainable wildlife tourism since valuing a particular species as worthy of preservation, for example, might be strongly against beliefs previously held by some members of the wildlife tourism community.

Relationships between people and wildlife differ between more developed and less developed countries. However, globally, wildlife tourism is often connected with, or even a consequence of, the desire to conserve and protect a particular species: a further factor distinguishing it from other types of tourism. The concepts of conservation and sustainability carry with them a particular ideological framework

and worldview, the existence of which should not be assumed to be shared by all stakeholders (as discussed in Chapter Six).

Many factors influence attitudes toward, and satisfaction with, wildlife tourism attractions. Both the actual, and perceived, impacts of wildlife tourism will influence the attitudes of the various stakeholders and consequently affect sustainability (Burns and Sofield 2001). Attitudes will also be shaped by the values different stakeholders attach to wildlife both before and during its use as a tourism resource, and these attitudes are known to be consistent with human behaviour (Fishbein and Manfredo 1992, Manfredo, Vaske and Decker 1995). Thus, identification of attitudes toward wildlife tourism will bring us a step closer to understanding behaviour in the wildlife tourism setting. As noted by Jurowski *et al.* (1997:3), “Achieving the goal of favourable community support for the tourism industry requires an understanding of how residents formulate their attitudes toward tourism.”

Many authors in a wide range of disciplines have undertaken research on attitudes toward tourism and sustainability over the last thirty years.<sup>36</sup> The majority of these works focus on the way economic benefits can positively affect perceptions of tourism, while social and environmental issues generally have a negative effect (Ap 1992, Liu and Var 1986, Pizam 1978, Prentice 1993). Attitudes, however, depend on a variety of circumstances and characteristics including sociodemographic attributes, economic dependence on tourism, spatial proximity to attractions, attachment to the

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<sup>36</sup> See, for example, Allen *et al.* (1993), Brougham and Butler (1981), Choi and Sirakaya (2005), Doxey (1975), Godfrey (1998), Harris *et al.* (1997), Ioannides (2001), Martin and Uysal (1990), Reichel, Uriely and Shani (2008), Sirakaya-Truk (2007).

traditional culture of the area (Uriely *et al.* 2002:859), and feelings of control in relation to the attraction (Ryan 2002, Scheyvens 2002, Sofield 2003).

Pearce (1980), studying local acceptance of foreign tourists, found that people living in urban areas reacted more positively to tourists than did those living in more rural areas. This offers an important lesson for wildlife tourism, which is frequently based in rural areas where wildlife is situated (with some zoos being a notable exception). Mvula (2001:398) discovered something similar in the context of wildlife tourism in Zambia, where stakeholders living closer to tourist facilities had more opportunities for employment and tended to have a more positive attitude towards the tourism. The message here is probably less related to spatial proximity than to access to the perceived advantages from tourism. In Mvula's case, the more directly individuals benefited from the tourism, the more inclined they were towards a positive attitude. Thus, the facilities do not necessarily need to be close to the stakeholders who wish to be involved, but the stakeholders do need to be involved in beneficial ways to increase their likelihood of a positive attitude.

“Resident evaluation of the impacts of tourism and resident support for tourism are dependent on what they value” (Jurowski *et al.* 1997:3). Perceptions of the impacts of tourism are a result of assessing the benefits and costs, and this is clearly influenced by what residents value (p10). Thus, attitudes may also be shaped by the values placed on wildlife both before and during its use as a tourism resource.<sup>37</sup> Because human interaction with wildlife and wildlife tourism ranges over a broad spectrum, different stakeholder groups can be expected to have different attitudes

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<sup>37</sup> For further information on values associated with wildlife see Decker and Goff (1987), Duda *et al.* (1998), Howard (2007), Kellert (1996), Myers *et al.* (2000), and Whittaker *et al.* (2006).

toward wildlife influenced by their different values. These attitudes may range from care, concern and conservation to ambivalence or even open hostility (Burns and Sofield 2001:10).

Members of an indigenous stakeholder group, for example, may regard wildlife as a valuable resource to be utilised either for consumption or for commercial exploitation (such as poaching for food, skins, ivory or other material). Such activities are often in direct conflict with the utilisation of the same wildlife for tourism purposes by government agencies or private operators, especially if the tourism is conservation based. For example, mountain gorillas and some African stakeholders have not always existed in the type of (relatively) harmonious relationship upon which current wildlife tourism is based. Gorillas have traditionally been hunted for food and threatened by poaching, encroachment by farmers, livestock grazing, and wood and bamboo cutting (Butynski and Kalina 1998:296). The traditional indigenous use of large animals in Kenya (Norton-Griffiths 1998) also provides an example of such conflicting use, influenced by differing values.

Some wildlife tourism community members may also have an integrated relationship with wildlife in which certain animals are perceived as vital to their social, cultural, and psychological well-being and play an important ceremonial and symbolic role. The traditional totemic value system of Australian Aborigines is one of many possible examples (Mowaljarlai 2005). So too, in western Rajasthan the Bishnois have norms against the killing of certain wild animals species, such as deer (Agrawal and Gibson 1999:635). Activities of such groups and their relationship with wildlife may be incorporated into tourism, as is the case with some indigenous tourism in

Australia (Muloin, Zeppel and Higginbottom 2001) and hunter-gatherer tourism in Thailand (Cohen 1996).

Alternatively, a hostile relationship may exist between some stakeholders and the wildlife; for example, farmers concerned about wildlife populations killing their livestock (*e.g.*, Rabinowitz 2005) or competing with it for pastures, or damaging crops (*e.g.*, Cope *et al.* 2005, Skonhøft 1998, 2007). This is an issue in Kenya, for example, where 80 percent of wildlife spends at least some time outside protected areas (Shackley 1996:95). In many parts of Africa wildlife is considered a threat, not only to crops but also to human lives (*e.g.*, Naughton-Treves and Treves 2005). Consequently, it was traditionally uncommon for such wildlife to be viewed by locals as a resource to be conserved.<sup>38</sup>

At the other end of the scale, there may be indifference by some stakeholders to the wildlife around them. This appears to have been the case on Phillip Island in Victoria during the late 1800s when indifference almost led to the demise of the Little Penguin population (discussed in 5.4.1).

There is also the issue of conflict between residents and tourists where a significant wildlife attraction could bring greatly increased numbers of visitors to the area (such as seasonal whale watching at Byron Bay, New South Wales).<sup>39</sup> Conflict may also exist between different stakeholders over wildlife resources and their utilisation for tourism. For example, a study of Townsville Town Common in Australia (Birtles and Sofield 1992) recorded significant opposition to tourism development, which

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<sup>38</sup> For further case studies on conflicts between people and wildlife see Knight (2000b) and Woodroffe *et al.* (eds) (2005).

<sup>39</sup> Of course, conflict over increasing tourist numbers is not just relevant to wildlife tourism attractions. Joseph and Kavoori (2001), for example, document host community resistance to increasing religious tourism in India.

was considered intrusive, although other stakeholders within the community supported greater commercial exploitation of resources for tourism.

Some of the factors that affect attitudes towards any tourist attraction include:

- stakeholder access to financial benefits from the attraction,
- the degree of economic dependence different stakeholders have on the attraction,
- the length of local residence in the vicinity of the attraction (Harper 1997),
- the level of economic activity in the area (Allen *et al.* 1988),
- feelings of empowerment (control) or disempowerment in relation to the attraction (McKercher 1998, Ryan 2002, Scheyvens 2002, Sofield 2003).

Attitudes may be affected by one, or by a combination, of these factors. Following their identification, the next step is to measure attitudes and perceptions. Jurowski *et al.* (1997) suggest this may be done by assessing a range of impacts including (i) economic impacts (such as employment opportunities, revenue for local government, the price of goods and services, and the cost of land and housing), (ii) social impacts (such as opportunities for shopping and recreation, traffic congestion and crime rates, local services, the preservation of local culture, and relationships between residents and tourists), and (iii) environmental impacts (quality of the natural environment).<sup>40</sup>

Human attitudes and values towards wildlife may also change over time, as demonstrated later in case studies. In Australia, for example, introduced species of both plants (such as Mediterranean crops and fruits) and animals (such as rabbits,

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<sup>40</sup> Research by Jurowski *et al.* (1997) provides a theoretical basis for explaining the interplay of elements that affect attitudes toward tourism. In this study, they present many items that can be used to measure attitudes and perceptions. They also stress the importance of factors such as economic gain, use of the tourism resource base, an ecocentric attitude (ecological worldview), and attachment to community. For a model predicting value-attitude-behaviour see Vaske and Decker (1999).

donkeys) were enthusiastically promoted from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. By the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, with conservation ideology growing in popularity the attitudes toward these introduced species changed (Adams 2003a:21) with many non-native species now considered as feral pests. Arguments about the values ascribed to native versus introduced, and pest versus protected, species are particularly relevant to dingoes, as will be discussed in the following chapters.

Most of the cases described above illustrate shared values existing within a particular stakeholder group. Although values may also be ascribed on an individual level, from an anthropological perspective values are first and foremost culturally determined. If this is the case, it would be reasonable to expect the widest gap in stakeholder values of wildlife to exist between people from the most different cultural backgrounds; such as indigenous and non-indigenous (European) people. The gaps would become smaller once we examine stakeholders with the same cultural background. This thesis will also examine, in the context of the two case studies, how such values may be socially constructed and maintained.

From this discussion it is clear that support is needed from all members of the wildlife tourism community for wildlife tourism to be sustainable (Butynski and Kalina 1998:312, Lepp 2002:218, Reynolds and Braithwaite 2001:32) and this support is dependent on a variety of factors affecting values, attitudes, and perceptions of impacts. Thus, there is a need to look for ways to obtain this support for the benefit of all stakeholders in the wildlife tourism context. This will be explored by examining community engagement with wildlife tourism.

## **5.6 Community Engagement with Wildlife Tourism**

As previously noted, different members of the wildlife tourism community engage with wildlife tourism in a variety of different ways. This section discusses the involvement, and the benefits that can be obtained by active and willing participation and collaboration with the industry. Barriers to engagement are also examined, as well as the possible problems that may arise through attempting to incorporate a wide range of stakeholder participation.

### **5.6.1 From Involvement to Participation and Collaboration**

There is increasing recognition that a key element of natural resource management is the understanding and incorporation of the differing perspectives of stakeholders (Duffus and Dearden 1990, Reed *et al.* 2009, Wright 1998), and this parallel can be drawn with wildlife tourism. In the case of wildlife tourism, probably the most critical conflict in more developed countries exists between interest groups who give priority to the protection of natural resources and those who prioritise the quality of the visitor experience or the financial interests of tourism operators (Green and Higginbottom 2001). In less developed countries, conflicts between local community members and conservation or tourism interests are often the most prevalent (Giongo *et al.* 1994). Finer scale differences in perspectives are also likely, such as between different recreational user groups with differing aspirations for wildlife viewing (Manfredo *et al.* 2002).

One approach discussed in the literature as a way of encouraging support while incorporating different perspectives is through active stakeholder participation in all



phases of wildlife tourism. According to Shackley (1996:82), “One of the clearest things to emerge from two decades of debate about managing the interface of tourism and conservation has been that the success of any project depends on local community participation.” Although the literature increasingly recognises the importance and relevance of stakeholder participation in the management process (Chase and Decker 2007, Stolton and Dudley 1999),<sup>41</sup> full participation of all stakeholders has enormous “political economic complexity” (Adams and Infield 2003:187) and is not always as straightforward as anticipated. As O’Riordan (1976:258) stated over thirty years ago, “participation ... is a slippery concept that appears to be socially desirable but is constantly endangered by malpractice.” The desirability of participation has increased over time (Tosun 2006:493) and, it is hoped, the instances of malpractice are diminishing.

Governance directs attention to participatory approaches (Plummer and Fennell 2009:149) and the term participation, like empowerment, tends to be associated with neopopularist and sustainable development perspectives that focus on people in local contexts and on small-scale, bottom-up strategies for their development (Scheyvens 2002:51). Coupling this with wildlife tourism is not always easy, especially in situations where the industry is dominated by non-local investment and foreign conservation ideals.

Neopopularist theory suggests that local communities should be central to tourism planning and management, and it encourages the voices of those most affected by

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<sup>41</sup> Leal (2007), tracing the history of the notion of participation, claims that it has achieved the status of a ‘buzzword’ (p539) and thus the approach is in danger of losing its original ideological and philosophical meaning. Despite this, or perhaps because of it, the approach remains popular within the institutional development world.

tourism to be heard. This may be in the shape of formalised systems of local level planning which may actively involve local communities or, at the other extreme, protests by community groups dissatisfied with the way tourism is impacting on their society and environment (Scheyvens 2002:53).

As a form of host participation, the “park neighbour principle” is the most common approach to community conservation in Africa (Adams and Infield 2003:186) and has potential application in other countries and destinations where wildlife tourism occurs in parks and protected areas. As McKean (1996) has noted, vesting property rights in a resource’s nearest neighbours strengthens their incentives to become positively involved; for example, in enforcing rules about access. There are no residents on Penguin Island, yet this type of principle could be adopted with nearby residents on the mainland. It is more likely to be of use, however, on Fraser Island where patches of freehold land and townships border the national park.

Participation needs to occur equitably at all levels and between all stakeholders. To assist participation, “effective institutions must emerge from local communities and secure an equitable, transparent and reasonable engagement between local people and the state” (Agrawal and Gibson 1999, cited in Adams and Infield 2003:187). Such institutions may be community-based, but not all community-based arrangements emerge from the local community in the bottom-up type strategies espoused by neopopularist theory.<sup>42</sup> Various terms are associated with community approaches in natural resource management (*e.g.*, empowerment, co-operative, co-

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<sup>42</sup> Sofield (2003:257-284) uses an example of village ownership of ethnic tourism in Vanuatu to illustrate how indigenous hosts can combine bottom-up (community support) with top-down (government support) inputs to create a sustainable tourism venture.

management)<sup>43</sup> and are usually employed to convey power-sharing and participatory sentiment (Plummer and Fennell 2007:944).

The issue of power, and who holds it, is important in a discussion on stakeholder issues and interactions not only because it is relevant to the many competing interests in wildlife tourism. It is also an important component in the theoretical approach of social constructionism taken throughout this thesis. As argued in that approach, all things are subject to interpretation and how they are interpreted is often a function of power (Nietzsche in Cornwall 2007:471). To ensure equitable and effective participation and collaboration between stakeholders an understanding of the power structures operating in any given setting is necessary.

Collaboration between stakeholders is also discussed, often in connection with participation, in the general tourism and conservation literature; as Fennell and Dowling (2003:333) note, "... there appear to be many emerging models which place decision making and control for tourism in a collaborative arrangement." Fulton *et al.* (2002) offer one such example where collaborative planning, shared responsibility in defining goals and objectives and selecting preferred alternatives, is used to promote partnerships between and within stakeholder groups. Ideally, a shared stakeholder vision would be developed that reflects different values, but aims to reach a consensus where possible (Fulton *et al.* 2002). The success and practicality of this type of arrangement depends on numerous factors, but of key importance are the scale of the tourism and the range of formal and informal

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<sup>43</sup> For further exploration of co-management in this context see Fennell *et al.* (2008), Natcher *et al.* (2005), Plummer and Fennell (2007, 2009), Plummer and Fitzgibbon (2004), and Usher (1995).

processes (for example, planning committees, public forums and workshops, community surveys, participation in on-site management and monitoring).<sup>44</sup>

A further concept used in connection with development, economic growth and social inclusion is that of “good governance” and much of the theory entrenched in collaboration sees it as a governance response; that is, it implies good governance over resources. This has been discussed by Bramwell and Lane (2000a) among others. Good governance has received a widespread audience (Plummer and Fennell 2009:159), is increasingly used in development and other literature, and continues to gain currency as a policy directive (p157). It is understood to involve characteristics of participation, empowerment, accountability and social justice (Folke *et al.* 2005, Lebel *et al.* 2006) and consequently has relevance to the study of stakeholder involvement in wildlife tourism. For further discussions on collaboration and partnerships between stakeholders see, for example, Hall (2000), Plummer and Arai (2005), Plummer and Fitzgibbon (2004), Plummer *et al.* (2006), and Wondolleck and Yaffee (2000).<sup>45</sup>

Fulton *et al.* (2002) recommend a planning approach for managing experience-based wildlife viewing that balances advantages and disadvantages of rational-comprehensive planning and incremental planning. Rational-comprehensive planning clarifies the objectives first, considers all factors, and emphasises science and quantifiable measurement. By contrast, through incremental planning objectives evolve in conjunction with an analysis of options, decisions to proceed based on

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<sup>44</sup> See Bauber *et al.* (2002) for information on how to effectively incorporate stakeholder involvement.

<sup>45</sup> In addition to these sources, the Journal of Sustainable Tourism published a special issue in March 2009 (Volume 17, Number 2) dedicated to exploring relationships between tourism and protected area partnerships. This issue contains many recent sources on partnerships (Moore and Weiler 2009, McCool 2009), collaboration (Jamal and Stronza 2009) and governance (Eagles 2009).

stakeholder agreement, and there is limited analysis. Combining the two has the advantage that although planning decisions are still informed by science they are ultimately recognised as social decisions and directed by human values and preferences.

As the examples in this chapter demonstrate, participation and collaboration are not just futuristic ideals. There is much happening with regards to stakeholder participation in wildlife/nature based tourism, particularly in less developed countries, and effective involvement of all members of the wildlife tourism community is crucial. There are, however, a number of barriers to turning this rhetoric into a viable and practical reality.

### **5.6.2 Barriers to Effective Engagement of the Wildlife Tourism Community**

Barriers to community involvement and participation in wildlife tourism are similar to those identified in other forms of tourism and/or development, yet there are also some differences. A vital challenge for the industry lies in identifying these barriers and then finding ways to overcome them.

Key factors influencing host involvement in the tourism industry were outlined earlier (5.3); however, the World Bank (1996:23-28) identifies additional factors that may undermine effective participation by a wider range of stakeholders in planning processes. These include poverty, rural settings, illiteracy or language barriers, local values and culture, legal and tenure systems, interest groups, and concerns over confidentiality.

With regard to values and cultures, both local traditional cultural beliefs and practices and contemporary activities and behaviours may be in conflict with the sustainable goals of wildlife tourism or simply not what tourists want to see, and therefore undesirable to the tourism industry. Continued small-scale agriculture in a Ugandan National Park designated as a protected area for gorillas (Adams and Infield 2003) is one such example. Indigenous Maasai grazing cattle in East African game parks (Heath 2001:159) is another. In both of these examples the indigenous people lost access to the lands they had traditionally used for subsistence farming and are dissatisfied with wildlife tourism. This is a result of the inadequacy of current planning practices in incorporating indigenous stakeholder input and views.

Such conflict does not only exist between indigenous and non-indigenous wildlife tourism stakeholders. Debate over the killing of dingoes on Fraser Island (Burns and Howard 2003), has involved a much wider range of stakeholders (see Chapters Seven and Eight). This also provides an example of the dominance of values held by some members of the wildlife tourism community over others.<sup>46</sup>

A significant barrier to the sustainability, and success, of wildlife tourism based on conservation goals lies in the fact that not all stakeholders are allies in such goals. Conflict between indigenous Australians and conservationists over construction of a road through an ecologically important rainforest area in Queensland (Anderson 1989) offers an example of this. Protests against the construction of a tourist facility on Hinchinbrook Island, also in Queensland (Parker 2001:240), is another. It is important to deconstruct these goals, to examine where they came from and the

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<sup>46</sup> For a further example of attitudes toward lethal management of wildlife see Fulton *et al.* (2004).

ideology behind them so we might understand why they are not shared. An example of how this can be done is given in Chapter Eight.

Lack of education can be a substantial barrier to participation and employment in the tourism industry, and one that is frequently worse for women than men. In the case described by Mvula, fewer women were employed in the tourism industry than men as a result of the women's lower level of education (2001:400). A further factor affecting differential gender access to employment and other forms of participation in wildlife tourism is related to cultural norms that may impose barriers to women's employment outside the home in some societies (*e.g.*, Burns 2003).

Lack of capital can also be a barrier for some in the host community, restricting them from owning or operating a tourism venture. Therefore, it is common for locals to be employees, or even volunteers (Burns and Sofield 2001) rather than owners or operators. Again, Mvula's (2001:396) case study provides an example in which the tourism facilities are largely owned and managed by non-locals, and consequently the locals lack control in the industry. In many tourism businesses, especially in less developed countries, local people are not employed in the more senior and better paid jobs (*e.g.*, Burns 2003, Mvula 2001). As Mvula (2001:399-400) found, "locally recruited employees tended to occupy the more menial positions" and local workers were paid less than others. Access to capital is not the only reason for this situation and power relations (taking a political ecology perspective) are also at play. These examples illustrate that the role of power in relationships between tourism stakeholders clearly influences the way in which stakeholders have access to, and manage, the industry (Stonich 1998).

The willingness of some stakeholders to incorporate others in planning and management processes is a further important factor. Perceived disadvantages of such incorporation include diminished control for some stakeholders and time delays in decision-making processes that may result in delayed income, added costs to projects, and unrealistic community expectations (Pain 1989:27).

Collaborative decision-making processes were advocated in the previous section; however, a major problem encountered in such processes is the difficulty in achieving stakeholder representation (Wondolleck and Yaffee 2000). Although open access to collaborative planning is symbolically important, it is critical that key leaders and decision-makers participate in order to ensure that those who will be most affected, those with most control, and those most likely to lead appropriate behaviours, are at the table and effectively participating and representing the community's various segments (Wondolleck and Yaffee 2000).

As a result of these barriers, input into planning processes tends to be restricted to certain sections of the community. The outcome of such processes is likely to benefit some members of the community over others, leaving the potential for conflict between different sections that could jeopardise sustainability. This restriction might not be recognised by those responsible for the planning process, as it is not uncommon for the community to be erroneously treated as homogenous by policy makers (Fennell and Dowling 2003:333). Consequently, the many disparate voices, and the positions they hold, may “act as one of the main constraints to effective policy development” (p333). In addition, the complex composition of heterogeneous communities creates difficulties for operationalising the type and



level of community involvement envisaged in LA 21 (Jackson and Morpeth 2000:119). As Fennell *et al.* (2008:64) note, “the social and cultural settings in which heterogeneous actors are embedded prompts questions about multiple knowledge systems, varied institutions, underlying means of communication, and so on (Nadasdy 2003, Olsson *et al.* 2004, Natcher *et al.* 2005).”

As community participation and support are vital ingredients for the sustainability of wildlife tourism it is important to find ways of overcoming the barriers identified. This challenge may be more difficult for indigenous hosts (Johnston 2003) and in less developed countries where the barriers often seem more pronounced.

### **5.6.3 Potential Benefits**

There are many potential benefits of wildlife tourism for its community members and of community involvement for wildlife tourism.<sup>47</sup> However, before examining these, the potential pitfalls of identifying ‘costs’ and ‘benefits’ need to be acknowledged. Such classification is often based on the perspectives of the author, and other authors being cited, who are not usually the ones most affected. As Scheyvens (2002:8) illustrates:

If job creation transforms a community of self-sufficient farmers and traders into a community of employees reliant on a resort for menial, seasonal jobs as cleaners and service personnel, it would be difficult to argue that ‘good change’ had occurred.

Something perceived as a benefit by one stakeholder may be perceived as a cost by another. It is therefore important that any values associated with changes in each

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<sup>47</sup> See Mvula (2001:399) for a bar graph depicting benefits from tourism in a Zambian National Park.

stakeholder group are determined by the members of that group and not by outsiders who might hold very different world views. Perceived benefits received from tourism usually fall into such categories as employment, income, diversification of economic base and/or business opportunities, upgrading of infrastructure, visibility, and cultural benefits (Ashley and Roe 1998:11, Edgell 2002:17). Benefits from ecotourism and wildlife tourism should also include conservation of species and their habitats, as discussed in Chapter Four.

Profits from wildlife tourism can provide beneficial health care, education and food, and may contribute to the reduction of poverty for locals (Mvula 2001:394). If the wildlife tourism is sustainable, it can provide long-term revenue generation, assist conservation and raise the living standards of host communities (Ashley and Roe 1998:16, Mvula 2001:394).

Just as stakeholder involvement in wildlife tourism can be direct or indirect, so too the benefits can be direct or indirect. Most stakeholders who receive a direct benefit do so as a result of their own efforts; for example, through employment, or making handicrafts for sale. Those benefiting indirectly may be recipients of revenue distributed to a particular stakeholder group (Mvula 2001:398). The introduction of wildlife tourism to a region may also provide benefits to existing local businesses, as well as the creation of new businesses run by locals, jobs, publicity, and increased environmental awareness (Ashley and Roe 1998:12, Mvula 2001:398).

Wildlife tourism may bring considerable foreign exchange into a country (Higginbottom 2004, Tisdell and Wilson 2004). It is rare, however, especially in less developed countries, for this to result in tangible benefits at a household level

(Mvula 2001:398) due to ‘leakage’<sup>48</sup> of tourist expenditure from the locality visited and the capture of financial benefits by a small elite (Ashley and Roe 1998:11-12). Although tourism can diversify the economic base, if there is no existing base it can become the sole industry upon which a community relies for income. The hazards of such a dependency on tourism, regardless of the form, have been well documented (*e.g.*, Britton 1981, 1982a, Britton and Clarke 1987, de Kadt 1979).

Wildlife tourism has particular potential to stimulate peripheral rural economies, as its attractions are frequently located in remote areas - such as on Fraser Island in Queensland and in Kakadu National Park in the Northern Territory of Australia. Kakadu is co-managed by local indigenous people and the government-run Parks and Wildlife Service. This arrangement has brought benefits to the host community; however, it is also accompanied by costs and liabilities (Hall 2000b).

Situations where stakeholders effectively engage with wildlife tourism, and/or are satisfied in their relationship with it, hold benefits for wildlife tourism (*e.g.*, Lepp 2002). Indigenous and local stakeholders, for example, can positively contribute to both tourist experiences and species conservation via their often in-depth and extensive local knowledge, thus increasing the potential of a sustainable outcome, provided their different knowledge is taken into account.<sup>49</sup> An advantage of incorporating different knowledges and discourse, as observed by Wondolleck and Yaffee (2000) is that as such information is exchanged in collaborative processes it

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<sup>48</sup> Sources documenting the so-called ‘leakage’ of tourism-generated income from destination countries were prevalent in the 1980s and frequently linked to theoretical debates over modernisation versus dependency and underdevelopment theories (see, for example, Biddlecomb 1981, Crick 1988, and Graburn 1980).

<sup>49</sup> Snowden’s (2000) social ecology approach to knowledge management describes knowledge as both a ‘thing’ and a ‘capacity.’ He argues that because ‘things’ are easier to manage there has been a tendency to focus on knowledge in this capacity, as something that can be distributed with technology and “captured and codified into databases” (p242).

becomes a part of a shared knowledge base that is ‘owned’ by all members of the collaborative group; as dialogue progresses between groups, shared opinion begins to grow. The need for understanding different discourses of the environment and wildlife is discussed in the following chapter.

Edgell’s (2002:18) proposal that residents must determine whether the benefits are worth the costs involved presupposes that they are in a position allowing them enough power in the tourism industry to make that determination and, as the examples used throughout this chapter have demonstrated, they often are not. Obviously, access to power in relationships between stakeholders differs depending on context. In some cases hosts in more developed countries may have more power than hosts in less developed countries. The degree of control a stakeholder individual, or group, may have is borne out in Mitchell *et al.*’s (1997) discussion on stakeholder ‘saliency’. They acknowledge that the significance of an individual stakeholder in a given circumstance depends on the stakeholder’s power to influence outcomes, the legitimacy of the individual’s involvement, and the urgency associated with the individual’s involvement. Thus, the stakeholder’s saliency shifts with circumstance.

As demonstrated in this section, there are many potential benefits of wide stakeholder engagement with wildlife tourism, for both people and wildlife. Ultimately, however, all stakeholders need to be aware of both the potential benefits, as well as the potential costs, before embarking on a wildlife tourism venture.

#### 5.6.4 Problems That May Arise

As with the benefits discussed above, any costs or problems associated with wildlife tourism may be similar to those found within other forms of tourism and/or development. And, similar to the benefits, costs will not be perceived in the same way by all stakeholders. Also, like the barriers discussed earlier, problems are likely to be exacerbated in less developed countries and for indigenous people (which are not the focus of this thesis). Some of the potential disadvantages of wildlife tourism for residents and other local stakeholders include dispossession (displacement/resettlement), loss of access to resources, competition and conflict over the distribution of funds, asymmetrical power relations, degradation of natural environments (Mvula 2001:394), and increasing commodity and property prices which can disrupt local lifestyles and increase the economic burden on local people (Butynski and Kalina 1998:305).

Dispossession is one of the most obvious impacts, and one frequently perceived to be negative by locals. Wildlife tourism may intrude upon local cultures and societies at the destination, and may even displace them. While few communities have been displaced solely in the name of tourism, displacement has often occurred in the name of conservation (*e.g.*, in the Yosemite National Park in California and the Royal Chitwan National Park in Nepal),<sup>50</sup> and in connection with other forms of development (*e.g.*, the Three Gorges Dam project on China's Yangtze River). Examples of locals being displaced and dispossessed of their land when a wildlife attraction occurs in a location that becomes designated as a conservation area, and

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<sup>50</sup> This separation of people and nature is discussed further in Chapter Six.

local use of it is then prohibited, are plentiful. Many biodiversity conservation programmes in Africa, for example, have tended to result in the dispossession of local people and/or prevent them from “engaging in resource procurement activities” (Hitchcock 1997:82, Norton-Griffiths 1998). This in turn generally serves to exacerbate problems of poverty and resource stress (Hitchcock 1997:82), especially in situations where compensation for such displacement and loss of access is perceived as inadequate; such as with with mountain gorilla tourism in Uganda (Adams and Infield 2003).

Extensive research of wildlife tourism cases has shown that involuntary relocation of people with strong ties to the land, such as indigenous people, has almost without exception resulted in a reduction in the standards of living of those moved: “While some of the people may temporarily be better off, over the longer term conditions can be expected to worsen” (Hitchcock 1997:88). This situation arises in part because of increased competition for natural resources and for employment opportunities (p88) commonly heralded as a benefit of involvement with tourism. Resettlement out of conservation/tourism areas can also lead to an increase in interethnic tensions and community conflict (p88).

As a result of the designation of a conservation or protected area, local people frequently lose access to previously utilised resources. In this way, tourism in these areas can exploit local people, by prohibiting them from using resources (such as trees for firewood), and preventing their traditional hunting and fishing (Mvula 2001:399). An example of this exists in Kenya where the Kenya Wildlife Service enforces property rights to Protected Areas by granting access only to tourists and

excluding neighbouring land-owners and landusers (Norton-Griffiths 1998:284-285). Similarly, the closing of tracks on Fraser Island and selective fencing of some sites in the World Heritage Area has angered some residents who perceive they are losing their freedom on the island (as discussed further in Chapter Seven).

Wildlife can also spread disease, kill and maim people, and damage property. The encouragement of wildlife to areas for tourism may exacerbate these problems. Spread of disease and property damage were discussed earlier, and do not constitute major problems on either Penguin Island or Fraser Island. However, injury to people by dingoes is a major concern on Fraser Island, as will be discussed in Section Three of this thesis.

A further problem commonly associated with stakeholder involvement with tourism concerns the distribution of financial revenues. A major problem identified with integrated conservation and development programmes (ICDPs) is that they “generally underestimated the costs of compensating people for their losses and have not been able to come up with strategies that restore livelihoods or replace income lost as a result of project implementation” (Hitchcock 1997:86).<sup>51</sup> Emerton (2001) warns that the economics of both costs and benefits from wildlife should be treated with caution. Some stakeholders may perceive that they are receiving an inequitable amount compared with other stakeholders. Distribution between different stakeholder groups or individuals may also be perceived as inequitable. Shackley (1996:91) raises the issue of some stakeholders not receiving their fair share of

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<sup>51</sup> Hitchcock (1997:86) cites a case in Cameroon where the resident host community was moved outside the created park and promised assistance with resettlement that did not eventuate. For an assessment of ICDPs see Johannesen and Skonhoft (2005).

revenues as a problem with wildlife tourism. This is supported by Mvula's (2001:400-401) findings in Zambia that:

the predominant view expressed by the local community was that tourism in the area was not equitable. The majority of people felt that wages of locally recruited employees in the lodges were low and that there was inequality in working conditions between themselves and white employees. They also claimed that local people were excluded from the more senior jobs in the lodges because of their lack of access to training to equip them for these roles and the discriminatory practices of some lodges. Women in particular felt marginalised as the majority of employers practised a 'men only' employment policy.

Uneven or inequitable distribution of funds can lead to conflict when one stakeholder group is perceived to benefit over another, and when some groups or individuals within the community benefit over others. Competition for funds from wildlife tourism clearly exists between different stakeholder groups. As Adams and Infield (2003:183, 186) discovered, many groups in Africa could legitimately share in the potential large profits from gorilla tourism in parks; including locals, tourism/conservation business, and the national government. Some of the problems identified with gorilla tourism relate to unstable revenue that does not succeed in meeting the economic expectations of locals, as discussed in an earlier example. In reality, very little park revenue stays in the immediate area and little re-investment is made in the parks or the local people (Butynski and Kalina 1998:305).

Perceived inequities in the distribution of benefits, not just direct financial benefits but also benefits from opportunities, such as employment, is a further source of



conflict identified in ICDPs (Hitchcock 1997:89). In addition, the growing population of some local stakeholder groups, such as those interacting with gorilla tourism in Uganda (Lepp 2002:219), puts further strain on resources and profit distribution.

It would seem that although wildlife tourism brings rewards, its benefits are seldom distributed equitably<sup>52</sup> (Shackley 1996:91): “Whatever the size of revenue streams from wildlife, there are questions of allocation between different interests” (Adams and Infield 2003:178). Where wildlife tourism is associated with conservation, for example, competing interests may come from those whose primary concern is to use such revenues to support the livelihood and development needs of locals and those who desire to use revenues primarily to meet the planning, administration and management costs of conservation (Adams and Infield 2003:178).

Conservation efforts can also negatively affect local people’s basic human rights (Hitchcock 1997:81, Johnston 2003).<sup>53</sup> In Africa, for example, people have been “killed by government officials in the pursuit of biodiversity preservation” (Hitchcock 1997:83).<sup>54</sup> Since the time of colonial institutions in Africa, “coercive conservation” (p83) has taken place and people perceived as obstacles have been beaten and tortured (p87). This probably tells us more about the political climate of that particular country than about wildlife tourism; however, it highlights the fact that the local context needs to be taken into account when

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<sup>52</sup> Mvula (2001:402) uses a bar graph to show that the local community receives the least income when tourist revenue is distributed.

<sup>53</sup> See Hitchcock (1997:82) for a table of conservation efforts in Africa that have had a negative effect on the well-being of local communities.

<sup>54</sup> Hitchcock (1997:89) cites an example of this in Zimbabwe’s Tsholotsho District where Tyua Bushmen forced out of a designated wildlife management area were arrested and shot.

developing any wildlife tourism venture: “the national context within which a tourism development plan is proposed should not be overlooked, as it can affect its sustainability” (Lepp 2002:219).

In North America, wolves were historically persecuted by Euro-Americans settlers (Kellert *et al.* 1996:997). However, they became the “focus of a significant attitudinal transformation during the latter half of this century” such that now many stakeholders “view the wolf in positive and protective ways” (p997). This attitudinal change facilitated the release of grey wolves back into Yellowstone National Park in 1995 and their subsequent recovery (Varley and Boyce 2005:315). The growth and diffusion of wolf populations in this region is positively received by park visitors (Duffield *et al.* 2008) but more negatively reacted to by nearby ranchers and farmers who suffer economic costs due to wolf predation on livestock.

All these costs can potentially lead to resentment and antagonism between stakeholders in the wildlife tourism community. If stakeholders are sufficiently discontented, they may retaliate against the wildlife. In such a situation they could become a direct threat not only to the sustainability of wildlife tourism but also to any associated conservation attempts. For example, a study by the Kenya Wildlife Service showed that the vast majority of landowners and users in pastoral Kenya would like to see protected areas opened for development and all wildlife eradicated (KWS 1995c, cited in Norton-Griffiths 1998:285) because they do not perceive any benefits from wildlife conservation. Norton-Griffiths (1998) dismisses the “romantic notion that pastoralists coexist with wildlife in a harmonious relationship” (p288) in the Kenyan context where current population growth leads to demand for increased production (p288) and wildlife is an obstacle.

“Host communities, particularly those in the developing world, are increasingly counting the costs of development that has failed to put their rights and interests on a par with those of their visitors” (Mvula 2001:393). When residents are removed from the land on which they have traditionally subsisted for many generations, it would seem their rights and interests are also not considered on a par with other stakeholders, such as the tourists or the wildlife. Scheyvens (2002:54) remarks that “many efforts at implementing environmentally sensitive tourism have focussed on the conservation of resources ..., neglecting the livelihood needs of local communities.” The ideologies underlying this type of conservation are discussed in the following chapter. While there is clearly a need to protect the tourist attracting resource, there is also a need for recognition that local stakeholder groups may be linked with that resource in varying ways. Thus there is also need to protect, or at least provide for, those groups of people.

An analysis of the costs and benefits of wildlife tourism might conclude by seeing it as a necessary evil in some contexts. Without the incentives and revenue from tourism, the Mountain gorilla population in Africa (McNeilage 1996) and the Little Penguin population on Australia’s Phillip Island (Harris 2002, section 5.4.1) are unlikely to have survived. For the conservation of the species it may seem necessary to promote wildlife tourism as a form of development, but whether this is the best course of action for other stakeholders needs further consideration.

## **5.7 The Way Forward for the Wildlife Tourism Community**

Many of the problems associated with wildlife tourism also apply to other forms of tourism, and may therefore share common solutions. However, it is important to

note from the outset that “there is no simple overall solution as each community is governed by a different set of constraints” (Shackley 1996:88). So, too, appropriate solutions may differ between more developed and less developed countries.

Solutions to some problems, such as top-down approaches and lack of participation in conservation and tourism, have been attempted through ICDPs and CBNRM (Community Based Natural Resource Management). These approaches assume “that people will be more likely to conserve resources if they are able to gain direct benefits from them” (Hitchcock 1997:81). Ideally, such benefits lead to positive attitudes toward conservation (Mvula 2001:397); however, the results of ICDPs have been mixed. While providing income and employment for some, they have also reduced access to land and resources, increased wildlife depletion, increased impoverishment, and exacerbated internal conflict (*e.g.*, Hitchcock 1997:86-7).

If ICDPs and CBNRM programmes truly are community-based then they should fit with neopopularist approaches that promote the centrality of locals in tourism planning and management (Scheyvens 2002:53). Ideally, the establishment of local organisations aim to give these stakeholders the opportunity to contribute to policy formation. Such a “bottom-up method with projects initiated at a local level is always more successful, ..., and generally results in more widely disseminated benefits” (Shackley 1996:83).

The value placed on the tourist attracting wildlife is likely to differ between stakeholders. Without an appreciation of the economic value of wildlife as a tourist-attraction, local people are less likely to support its protection through the development of tourism. Therefore, financial issues specific to wildlife tourism need

to be solved to the satisfaction of all stakeholders. However, is it not easy to ensure this takes place especially in contexts where some stakeholders occupy a position of less power than others. At the very least, those removed from within park boundaries and affected park neighbours need to be adequately and equitably compensated for the direct and indirect costs (such as crop raiding and loss of access to resources) of wildlife tourism. Where this has been undertaken, it has met with little success and clearly new approaches are needed (Lepp 2002:219).

Financial equity is only one of many issues however, and there is general agreement in the tourism literature that interested stakeholders should have a full participatory role in every stage of development of a tourism proposal (Aas *et al.* 2005, Burns and Sofield 2001, Scheyvens 2002, Sofield 2003). A challenge for wildlife tourism is to turn passive involvement into active participation (Ashley and Roe 1998:24, Mvula 2001:395). However, this must be reconciled with the knowledge that such participation is not a proven solution to all problems (Bolton 1997:241). If residents, for example, resent the intrusion and attention of outsiders, for whatever reason, then it is reasonable to assume that they might also resent the existence of a wildlife tourism attraction. Bolton (1997:146) suggests that this situation can be avoided by keeping people and wildlife separated at the tourism destination. This evasive method may solve resident discontent in some contexts, but could also exacerbate it by excluding this important stakeholder group from something with which they may want to be involved. For example, in the case Mvula (2001:404) describes, “Local people feel that tourism would be more equitable, and the benefits greater, if they had more active involvement in the industry through running their own tourism enterprises.” Such separation also effectively avoids any chance of real empowerment for the local residents, and thus emphasises the point that solutions

posed should be evaluated in the unique context of each situation. The notion of separating people and wildlife is discussed further in the following chapter.

Where participation is embraced, Scheyvens (2002) and Sofield (2003) argue that it needs to go further than active involvement to ensure that all community members have some control over the outcomes and are empowered by the process. They posit that community empowerment is a crucial element in attaining sustainable tourism, but that further research is needed to understand how such empowerment is best achieved. In particular, Sofield (2003) notes a need to better understand the role of empowerment in sustainable tourism development as well as the place of perceptions, values and priorities regarding tourism in the community.<sup>55</sup> The adoption of collaborative management structures and processes (as found at Uluru and Kakadu National Parks in Australia) can encourage a wide range of stakeholder engagement and foster equitable ways of working together in recognition of the need for cooperation with other stakeholders both within and beyond the wildlife tourism community (Scheyvens 2002:10).

A further strategy worthy of investigation in relation to wildlife tourism is the 'livelihoods approach' which "calls for attention to be paid to a diversity of livelihood strategies, rather than encouraging communities to embrace tourism at the expense of other subsistence and economic opportunities" (Scheyvens 2002:51). This may be especially relevant to situations where wildlife tourism has not proven to be completely satisfactory to locals (*e.g.*, Norton-Griffith 1998:285). Where this strategy is adopted, and thus far it seems more common in more developed countries,

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<sup>55</sup> In relation to indigenous people, the term 'self-determination' is also used to make a similar point (Johnston 2003).

it has met with some success. For example, the Australian Phillip Island local stakeholders (discussed in 5.4.1) are not solely reliant on the income from wildlife (penguin) tourism for their livelihoods and this may well be a contributing factor to the tourism's sustainability. Such diversification can offer advantages to situations like that of gorilla tourism in Rwanda and Uganda (discussed earlier), where political instability has threatened the continuation of income from wildlife tourism, by fostering the existence of alternative subsistence activities.

“Under such a regime a community may identify tourism as just one strategy for development utilising their natural resources while agriculture, craft production and hunting are concurrently pursued in a sustainable manner” (Scheyvens 2002:55). One problem that arises when trying to couple alternate strategies with wildlife tourism is that the goals of these strategies (such as hunting) may conflict with the goals of wildlife tourism (such as conservation) and the expectation of tourists. That is, tourists are unlikely to be happy if hosts hunt or cull the wildlife they have come to view, especially if the wildlife is in a protected area. Also, when the tourism is embedded in ecocentric Western notions of conservation then even culling away from the tourist gaze, as occurs on Fraser Island, is unlikely to be supported by the wider community.

Although some alternative strategies might be incompatible with some forms of wildlife tourism, it may be possible to combine other forms of tourism with wildlife tourism and through this focus on what the different stakeholders want to present for tourist consumption. Mvula (2001), for example, notes the possibility of combining cultural tourism with wildlife tourism in Zambia and this has been put into practice

elsewhere; for example, the Harry Nanya Tours in Australia where camel riding and indigenous cultural interpretation is a focus but wildlife spotting is included (Muloin, Zeppel and Higginbottom 2001:13).

Before any of these proposed solutions become widespread in practice there is need for a fundamental shift in the power relations (Fennell and Dowling 2003:333) between tourism stakeholders that underlie many of the problems, especially those related to inequity in distribution of benefits and decision making. Residents and other local stakeholders, especially those in less developed countries, are the most likely to be marginalised in tourism's power structure and they must be included as equal partners in the development process (p333). The managers and policy makers in the tourism system need to be willing to focus less on traditional policy and more on finding ways to adopt innovative and integrated policy schemes (p340). Such policies need to be flexible to the 'on the ground' context,<sup>56</sup> and willing to acknowledge and incorporate a range of different discourses.

As with all development projects, it is not adequate in wildlife tourism to simply impose traditional models devised elsewhere on the assumption that they will be equally applicable in all contexts (Gardner and Lewis 1996). Because a wildlife tourism venture is successful in one context does not mean it will be successful in another. Assuming conservation of an endangered species to be a universally held goal might be inaccurate<sup>57</sup> because, as discussed, not all stakeholders share the same

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<sup>56</sup> Norton-Griffiths (1998:285) cites an example of new policy options in Kenya that aim "to ensure that the benefits of wildlife to landowners create incentives to invest in wildlife conservation so that landowners (and users) will become partners in conservation with the Kenya Wildlife Service rather than opponents".

<sup>57</sup> Sofield and Li (2003), for example, highlight a dominant philosophy in China that perceives nature to be imperfect thus giving humans a responsibility to improve it: a belief in direct opposition with the thinking of ecocentric philosophers of the Western world.



attitudes and values towards wildlife. Imposing values and associated policies cross-culturally on all members of the wildlife tourism community will likely lead to dissatisfaction and resentment, especially if it is done without explanation (education), collaboration (participatory involvement), and adequate compensation. All these factors need to be designed to fit with the local context and the goals of the various community members. Education needs to be undertaken in an appropriate and culturally sensitive fashion. Collaboration needs to occur in ways that are meaningful to all stakeholders, and compensation determined and distributed in a manner that recognises the competing values (not just monetary) of the wildlife resource. Such an approach is not easy, but it is necessary.

## **5.8 Conclusions**

Beeton (2006:14) asserts that “tourism exists in communities, not outside them”; a recognition which emphasises the centrality of community when discussing tourism. Consequently, it was necessary to devote time to a discussion of community, especially in the context of wildlife tourism.

The general tourism, natural resource and conservation literature and discourses provide important lessons for understanding the position of the various stakeholders who constitute the wildlife tourism community. There is a need to critically analyse examples for, and from, the complete range of stakeholder perspectives. The literature and examples drawn upon in this chapter illustrate some of the important multifaceted relationships between members of the wildlife tourism community, and this tells us much about wildlife tourism. For example, through extensive traditional, and in-depth, knowledge local residents can enhance the wildlife experience for

tourists and positively contribute to species and ecosystem conservation; thus increasing the possibility of wildlife tourism being sustainable. Effective stakeholder participation in planning and management can build support for wildlife tourism developments, create new partnerships, help resolve conflicts between stakeholders, and provide an additional source of knowledge and labour. Revenue, via compensation and employment, from wildlife tourism can increase standards of living. However, form and distribution of revenue need to be carefully considered through a process that includes the active participation of affected stakeholders and this needs to be balanced against the substantial costs in money and time required for comprehensive programs of stakeholder participation.

The barriers identified, which may be peculiar to each wildlife tourism context, need to be overcome in ways that ensure the flow of maximum benefits and minimum costs to the people and to the wildlife. A key challenge is to find opportunities for stakeholder involvement, if they want to be involved, and appropriate paths for involvement that ensure equitable financial and power related benefits. Although increased participation is a commonly argued goal, it will only be effective if willingly adopted by all stakeholders. Even if all stakeholders chose to participate and other stakeholders willingly incorporate them, it should still be recognised that even strongly supported participation is not a panacea. Where some stakeholders experience dependency and disempowerment a more integrated and collaborative approach, promoting a diversity of engagement strategies for the wildlife tourism community, may be successfully adopted. Most crucial is the recognition of differing world-views and discourses of nature and conservation, among stakeholders such as tourists, managers and residents. These views, and the values

they encompass, hold the key to the success of wildlife tourism and ultimately influence possibilities for its sustainability. Consequently, they are the focus of the next chapter.

## SECTION TWO: UNDERSTANDING THE LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL CONCEPTS

### CHAPTER SIX

#### **Nature and Culture: Wildlife and People**

##### **6.0 Introduction**

This chapter establishes the final theoretical principles guiding the analysis in this thesis. It begins with an outline of the relationship between wildlife tourism and conservation, necessary because the two often occur together in the same location and can be reliant upon one another. Conservation is informed by the dominant ideology of nature, an ideology, it is argued, that has been projected through history by colonialism. Hence, the second section addresses the legacy of colonialism, and its inherent assumptions about nature, for conservation, and ultimately wildlife tourism. The final section discusses the separation of humans and nature by the Cartesian culture/nature dualism, and how this is exacerbated by the scientific community's fear of anthropomorphism.

## 6.1 Wildlife Tourism and Conservation

The definition of wildlife tourism adopted throughout this thesis is of tourism based on encounters with non-domesticated animals. Wildlife tourism was discussed in Chapters One and Four and positioned as a subsection of nature-based tourism, one that engages with nature in a particular way (*i.e.*, through wildlife). As such, wildlife tourism is frequently coupled with ecotourism with which it (ideally) shares the same goals of ecological and sociocultural integrity. The ecological focus of wilderness tourism, ecotourism, nature-based tourism and wildlife tourism make them conceptually difficult to separate as tourists may visit a destination to view a combination of flora, fauna and geographical features. Popular Australian destinations such as the Kakadu and Fraser Island World Heritage Areas offer prime examples of this phenomenon.

Although Curtin (2005:1) describes wildlife tourism as “essentially a hedonistic activity,”<sup>1</sup> it is often connected with, or even a consequence of, the desire to conserve and protect a particular animal species: a factor distinguishing it from other types of tourism.<sup>2</sup> Certainly “many conservationists have promoted ecotourism as a strategy to protect natural resources” (Stronza 2007:210), and the same can be noted for wildlife tourism (Higginbottom and Tribe 2004).

As will be demonstrated throughout this thesis, the concepts of conservation and sustainability carry with them a particular ideological framework and worldview, the

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<sup>1</sup> Ryan, Hughes and Chirgwin (2000) similarly found in their study of visitors to a conservation area in Australia that ecotourism at this destination was more akin to a “hedonistic experience” (p148) than a learning one.

<sup>2</sup> For case studies that demonstrate the link between wildlife tourism and conservation see, for example, Ballantyne *et al.* (2007), Johannesen and Skonhoft (2005), Shelton and Tucker (2008), Tisdell and Wilson (2002, 2003, 2005).

existence of which should not be assumed to be held by all members of the wildlife tourism community. Similarly, “the ontological argument for the preservation of nature ... [can be seen to exist] ... on aesthetic and ethical grounds (Hargrove 1993)” (Fennell 2006:189), which carry with them particular sets of values.

A discussion of the different values humans place on wildlife was undertaken in the previous chapter (section 5.5), and it is useful to note here in the context of conservation that the perceived value of wildlife can be ascribed differently depending upon different purposes or functions it serves for humans. For example, the aesthetic value of a particular wildlife species can be different from its conservation value, although they may also be the same and may certainly be linked. Potter (2002), for example, found that if a species is considered cute and charismatic then public support for its conservation is easier to obtain, demonstrating that more support might be given for conservation if the aesthetic value of the species is high.

Valuing a species as a food source may also be very different to the value given to it for conservation. That is, humans do not necessarily conserve a species because of its utility as food. There are many historical records of this, and the extinction of the Moa by Maori hunters in New Zealand (Flannery 1994) is perhaps one of the most dramatic examples of this phenomenon.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, although the Alaskan Inupiat might positively value whales as a food source (Chance 1990), for example, they may not rate them highly in terms of conservation value. Just because a species is an important source of food does not necessarily mean that it will be valued highly for other reasons. To move away from indigenous examples, non-Aboriginal Australians eat kangaroo and barramundi. Are they highly valued because of this

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<sup>3</sup> For further examples of over-hunting and species extinction by indigenous people see Fennell (2008:135-136).

purpose? The kangaroo is ascribed value as an icon, of something that is typically Australian,<sup>4</sup> and is heavily marketed as such in the context of tourism, but barramundi is not.

It is also important to recognise that the ascribed value may differ according to the perception of the valuer. For example, very rarely, prior to the development of wildlife tourism in a region, do we find wildlife valued simply as an attraction for its own sake; and it is my contention that the success of wildlife tourism, or even its existence, may depend on changes to values placed on the attracting wildlife. Altering stakeholder views can be a major challenge for sustainable wildlife tourism. Valuing a particular species worthy of preservation, for example, might be strongly against beliefs previously held by some members of the wildlife tourism community. For these reasons, the topic of values was discussed in section 5.5.

Wildlife tourism is often implemented in destinations where there is a desire to conserve a particular species and the need to make conservation economically viable. In such situations, tourism may form part of an Integrated Conservation and Development Programme (ICDP),<sup>5</sup> as discussed in the previous chapter. Alternatively, the tourism may exist first and lead to a desire for conservation and preservation, or a perceived need for conservation may be identified and tourism chosen as the economic pathway to achieve this.

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<sup>4</sup> Interestingly, this iconic status does not prevent kangaroos from being culled by wildlife managers although such killing generates public anger from domestic and international animals rights groups (Clarke and Ng 2006, Maley 2008:5).

<sup>5</sup> ICDPs have frequently been established in Africa to improve wildlife conservation and the welfare of local communities; however, they have also been established in other countries such as the Phillipines (Palma *et al.* 2001) and Papua New Guinea (M. Kennedy 1992). For further information on ICDPs see, for example, Brooks *et al.* (2006), Johannesen and Skonhøft (2005), and Mapedza and Bond (2006).

There is certainly potential for a positive relationship to exist between tourism and conservation (Hall 1998, Higginbottom and Tribe 2004),<sup>6</sup> just as there is potential for a negative one. Tourists can be attracted by the types of features deemed worthy of conservation, and willingly pay to experience them. If this brings income to members of the host community, their recognition of the economic value of the tourist attracting features may lead to activity that promotes conservation (for example, Lindberg *et al.* 1996).<sup>7</sup> However, tourism activities can also destroy the very features that need to be conserved (Green and Giese 2004).<sup>8</sup> As Brechin (2003:xvi) states, “in the broadest terms, people are indeed the essential problem to conservation; they are also its only solution.”

Tourism and conservation may exist in a relationship of conflict, coexistence or symbiosis (Budowski 1976). Higham and Bejder (2008:76) argue that literature in the past three decades has focused on the potential for symbiosis even though the evidence to support this is lacking. Thus “one could be forgiven for thinking that ... coexistence is the best that can be hoped for ... (and) ... this appears to be particularly true of wildlife-tourist interactions” (p76). The concept and potential for coexistence is explored throughout this thesis.

I came to this thesis with an ideological commitment to conservation; however, I soon became acutely aware of the cultural and social biases in conservation form and practice around the world. This made me uncomfortable, and exploring the inherent problems in conservation offered a challenge I could not ignore despite the ethical

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<sup>6</sup> See Higginbottom, Tribe and Booth (2003) for a diagram illustrating some of the potential positive consequences of wildlife tourism for conservation.

<sup>7</sup> Increased income, however, does not guarantee support. Taylor *et al.* (2006) in their study of the Galapagos Islands raise questions about the compatibility of tourism income with conservation goals.

<sup>8</sup> For evaluations of the relationship between ecotourism and conservation see Brandon (1996), Bulbeck (2005), O’Kruger (2005), Ross and Wall (1999).



complexities of the task. I am not the first to highlight a need to rethink conservation strategies;<sup>9</sup> however, I may be one of the first to approach it from a combined anthropological and environmental science viewpoint, and to do it with a focus on wildlife tourism. This is a useful and highly relevant approach for, as Wilshusen *et al.* (2003:20) argue, “conservation programmes have yet to fully take advantage of a wealth of social theory and applied studies from disciplines such as anthropology, geography and sociology.”<sup>10</sup>

Langton (2003:90) defines conservation as “a general descriptor of human activities that are intended to mitigate against environmental degradation and biodiversity loss.” She notes that it “refers primarily to human decision-making about the wise use of resources and the maintenance of the natural and cultural values of land, water and biota” (p90). What frequently gets lost in definitions of conservation, however, is the acknowledgment that human decision-making is always dependent on cultural, social, political and economic contexts (Langton 2003:90).

Intrinsically linked to these varying contexts are the values humans ascribe to wildlife. The values found associated with wildlife tourism today, in all contexts, have undoubtedly changed over time. This is due to many factors, but one of the most important is probably widespread colonialism. Colonialism, particularly British colonialism which is most relevant to the case studies in this thesis, transformed nature, creating new relations between humans and non-human nature, and “new ideologies of those relationships” (Shiva 1989 in Adams and Mulligan 2003a:1). These ideologies are explored in this thesis.

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<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Adams and Mulligan eds (2003c) and chapters within, especially 5, 6, 9, and 11. Also Brechin *et al.* eds (2003).

<sup>10</sup> Mascia *et al.* (2003:649) also note the “vital importance of the social sciences to conservation.”

Discussing conservation is important because conservation, rather than tourism, is the driving force behind management in the two wildlife tourism case studies examined in this thesis. The dominant ideology of nature (Adams 2003a:17), projected through history by colonialism, informs current conservation: the way it is defined and the way it is enacted. But this dominant ideology is not universally representative. Instead, it comes from the one dominant voice during this time and that voice is a legacy of colonialism.

## **6.2 The Legacy of Eurocentric Colonialism for Conservation and Wildlife Management**

European occupation of Australia began when the country became a British colony in 1788. The acquisition of colonies was accompanied and enabled by the belief in restructuring and reordering nature to suit human needs (Adams 2003a:23).<sup>11</sup> Colonial ideas about nature in the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw it as either an economic resource to be alternatively conserved or exploited, or a reservoir of unchanged wilderness (Adams and Mulligan 2003a:1).<sup>12</sup> In either case, it was commonly viewed as something to be feared in its natural state, something that was more appealing once it had been changed, and thereby tamed, to suit European notions of order and control.<sup>13</sup> Nowhere was this more apparent than in the colonies, such as Australia, where the British found unfamiliar nature forms abhorrent and set about trying to alter them so that they conformed with a more English looking landscape and

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<sup>11</sup> An example of the ideology of European dominance over nature, the pursuit of unfamiliar wildlife and the powerful drive of scientific enquiry during the colonial era is well demonstrated by the study, that led to the near extinction of, the platypus in Australia (Moyal 2001).

<sup>12</sup> For further discussions on the use, and misuse of the concept of wilderness see, for example, Adams (2003:33-36) and Mulligan and Hill (2001).

<sup>13</sup> Short (2005:91), for example, discusses the notion of wilderness by early settlers in the USA as 'a place to be transformed into civilization'.

English fauna (hence the introduction of foxes and cats, for example). For evidence of these views we need look no further than famous European fairy tales, such as Hanzel and Gretel and Little Red Riding Hood, where the heroes of the tale are pitched against evil forces (witches and wolves respectively) found lurking in scary forests.

Such colonial ideas may stem from the period of European Enlightenment that suggested a superiority of rational humans over non-rational nature (Adams and Mulligan 2003a:3).<sup>14</sup> The resultant colonisation frameworks bred insensitivity to the land (Plumwood 2003:66). “Conservation has been deeply imbued with the European Enlightenment values that drove global colonial development” (Adams and Mulligan 2003a:7). These ideas and values have been essentially Eurocentric and anthropocentric, ignoring the physical and cultural reality of local and/or indigenous people and the intentionality and agency of non-human nature.<sup>15</sup> Consequently, “the colonial period saw a distinctive pattern of engagement with nature: a destructive, utilitarian and cornucopian view of the feasibility of yoking nature to economic gain,” a view that echoes “the fundamental Cartesian dualism between humans and nature” (Adams 2003a:22).

The picture began to change during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when organisations that aimed to conserve nature emerged throughout the British Empire. “However, not surprisingly, they reflected ideologies of nature that grew out of utilitarian and reductionist ‘natural’ sciences” (Adams and Mulligan 2003a:7).

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<sup>14</sup> Such a notion of human superiority over nature is not, however, confined to European nations. Sofield (2003) offers an example from China where people see nature as something for them to improve upon. Further examples, specifically in indigenous contexts, are offered by Fennell (2008) who views this behaviour as a human universal.

<sup>15</sup> For further discussion on agency in relation to the land and non-human aspects of nature see Plumwood (2006).

The end of the colonial rule saw the rise of new political structures, but not concurrently the rise of new thinking on behalf of the colonisers about people and nature (Adams and Mulligan 2003a:5). Consequently we find that “today’s ideologies of nature and the governance of nature draw directly upon the inheritance of colonialism” (Adams 2003a:17). Judaeo-Christian religions and Eurocentric ways of knowing still uncritically and universally separate ‘humans’ from ‘nature’ on the basis on rationality, reason, intent, and purpose (Escobar 1992),<sup>16</sup> as will be discussed in 6.3.

The British empire has been very important to the shape of modern conservation (Adams and Mulligan 2003a:3). Early colonial ideas became the foundation of the conservation and environmental movements; thus, an appreciation of this history is crucial to understanding the contemporary situation for conservation and ultimately wildlife tourism. From this colonial basis, throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, these “ideas flowered and seeded widely ... Conservation became a global concern, the subject of major investment by states, and of urgent concern to growing environmental movements” (Adams and Mulligan 2003a:1).

Such investment and concern was, and continues to be, linked to the dominant Western colonial ideology of conservation: an ideology that historically led environmental movements to think they were making the best choices and decisions. However, it also allowed them to forget that the actions they take may only be doing the right thing for some sections of a community and thus ignoring others.

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<sup>16</sup> It is worth noting at this point that some authors consider culture/nature dichotomies to be false. Baldwin (2006), for example, argues that such dichotomies obscure the commonality of culture to humans and non-humans and processes.

By the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century conservation had become an important element in public concern and government policy everywhere (Adams 2003a:21). In the postcolonial contemporary world, there are two dominant perspectives on conservation, both of which cast it in a positive light: “Conservation has inherited both a romantic tradition that has decried the impact of ‘modernization’, and a scientific rational tradition that seeks to manage nature for human enjoyment and material benefit” (Adams and Mulligan 2003a:8). This has come about, no doubt, because as conservationism and science developed together they need to support each other. “Colonial conservation allowed resources to be appropriated, both for the use of private capital and as a source of revenue for the state itself” (Adams 2003a:25). Conservation resources are still utilised in this way today.

Consequently, in the light of this colonial legacy, Adams and Mulligan (2003a:2) call for a “need to rethink conservation strategies.” They argue that “current discourse about nature conservation needs to become much more inclusive (particularly of the peoples who were colonized) and more dynamic in the face of complex global socio-political changes” (Adams and Mulligan 2003a:2). Of course, this does not apply exclusively to the colonised but to all those disempowered under current management structures.<sup>17</sup>

One of the important ways conservation has changed in recent years is that debates have been globalised, and the now global discourse of conservation is dominated by people and organisations from nations that benefited most from colonisation (Adams and Mulligan 2003a:9). Without commencing a lengthy discussion on globalisation,

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<sup>17</sup> Displacement of traditional lifestyles, as explored in Chapter Five (5.6.4), is one way this disempowerment has occurred. This is discussed in the context of ecotourism by Fennell (2008).

this broadly means that such debates are now firmly entrenched in the dominant discourse making it even harder for alternative voices to be heard.

A further recent change stemmed from “the recognition that conservation fails to achieve its goals when local people are unsupportive, or are not meaningful partners, [consequently] the question of local participation is now firmly on international conservation and sustainable development agendas” (Furze, de Lacy and Birckhead 1996:3). This is acted out in the “community-based conservation paradigm” advocated by the WWF and many academics (Fennell 2008:139). The topic of stakeholder involvement and participation was a focus of Chapter Five.

A major problem with the way conservation is discussed, and enacted in the Western imperialist ‘fortress mentality’ approach (Fennell 2008:139), lies in its insensitivity to local human needs and lack of recognition of diversity of world views. Throughout history we can see that “it has often been imposed like a version of the imperial endeavour itself: alien and arbitrary, barring people from their lands and denying their understanding of non-human nature” (Adams and Mulligan 2003a:9). Clear examples of this can be seen in African contexts with game animals and mountain gorillas (Adams and Infield 2003, Hitchcock 1997, Norton-Griffiths 1998), as discussed in Chapter Five.

Adams (2003a:42) summarises “Colonialism’s legacy for conservation” into five points that demonstrate how contemporary thinking bears the imprint of colonial ideas:

1. favours modern techno-scientific knowledge
2. sees nature as separate from human life
3. engagement with nature is regulated by bureaucratic control

4. engagement with nature is largely through regulation and coercion
5. with the aim of increasing productivity, strategies often work against nature rather than with it.

Current management structures often reflect this engagement with nature and wildlife that is regulated by bureaucratic controls and enacted through regulation and coercion. For example, Suchet (2001:125) argues that “The fundamental idea of ‘management’ is integrally tied up with colonisation, both historically and in the present” and that “Eurocentric notions of management are uncritically applied” to conservation.

Before leaving this section I want to make sure I have not over simplified the point about enduring colonial ideologies of nature and their dominant impact on contemporary conservation. Although one voice, the postcolonial European one, has become dominant in this discourse (largely as a consequence of relative power and influence), “there has been enormous diversity in the ways nature has been understood, and the ways conservation has been practised” (Adams 2003a:18). Callicott (2006:120-124), for example, discussing conservation ethics, compares the Judeo-Christian stewardship ethic with traditional non-Western environmental ethics. This serves to demonstrate considerable diversity in the historical emergence of ideologies of conservation and nature.

Despite this diversity however, there are still common themes in colonial discourse, and the ideas forged under colonial rule are still evident behind much contemporary thinking about conservation and have enduring power (Adams 2003a:19). The conception, and very definition, of conservation is frequently tied to notions of wild and wilderness (Hall 1992) that emanate from colonial discourse, as do beliefs that

animals and wildlife can be definitively categorised and assigned particular values (Suchet 2001:129). For these reasons, it remains meaningful to discuss the dominance of colonial discourse.

All of Adams's (2003a) five points are relevant to the case studies in this thesis and all are clearly interrelated. It is my intention to focus mainly on point 2 – the separation of humans and nature – though other points will also be discussed throughout the thesis.

### **6.3 Constructing the Separation of People and Wildlife**

One way the global conservation movement has gone about preserving natural areas, features, flora and fauna has been via the creation of national parks and protected areas.<sup>18</sup> Stemming from the earlier discussion on colonial views of nature, the question then needs to be asked whether an area is protected first and foremost as a way of controlling nature or conserving it; or are controlling and conserving the same thing? We applaud such conservation endeavours – but should we? Is it a further manifestation of human dominance over nature and wildlife, and of the values and ethics that promote some humans over others (that is, dominance of the colonisers who assumed they knew best)?<sup>19</sup> The protected area strategy has had many positive outcomes; however, it “tends to foster a conceptual separation between humans and nature, and between nature and culture, which creates both moral and practical dilemmas” (Adams and Mulligan 2003a:10).

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<sup>18</sup> For further information on the concept and evolution of parks see Fennell (2003:45-59), Worboys *et al.* (2005).

<sup>19</sup> An interesting contrast can be provided by comparing pre-colonial (often indigenous) land use management and practices with postcolonial ones. Indigenous people did not protect areas in this same ‘lock it up and don’t use it’ way. Is it necessary to have such formalised, ritualised, and regularised protections in place because of the vastly different scale in terms of user numbers?



The nature/culture dualism has long been criticised for constructing social beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours that fail to respect and value the natural world (Sowards 2006:45). It is usually characterised as a way of thinking that holds human culture and non-human nature to be radically different ontological spheres (Hawkins 2006:1). It is my intention in this thesis to show how this dualism is relevant to wildlife tourism, but first we need to understand the relationship between separation and the dualism.

The classic feature of colonial approaches to nature was the attempt to separate people and wild non-human nature. Animals were confined to reserves and shot as ‘problem animals’ when they transgressed invisible administrative boundaries and raided crops. People were to be kept at bay by the policing of protected area boundaries and the control of incursions through paramilitary anti-poaching patrol (Adams 2003a: 39).

Examples of this separation can be found in current management strategies in both case studies utilised in this thesis, as will be discussed Section Three. For example, on Fraser Island ‘problem’ dingoes are shot and there has been a rapid increase in the construction of fencing to prevent human-dingo interaction. On Penguin Island visitors are encouraged to use designated paths and boarded walkways to prevent random damage to the breeding habitat of penguins and other species.

The separation of people and animals involves an assumed hierarchy of human dominance and importance over non-humans. While this may be apparent in many cultures (Fennell 2008), cultural anthropologists have pointed out that the roots of the idea that human control over animality is part and parcel of a more inclusive ideology of human mastery, or appropriation of nature, lie deep in the traditions of

Western thought (Ingold 1988).<sup>20</sup> As Plumwood (2003:53) notes, this Eurocentric form of anthropocentrism parallels ethnocentrism and is a result of colonisation ideologies:

It tends to see the human sphere as beyond or outside the sphere of 'nature', construes ethics as confined to the human (allowing the non-human sphere to be treated instrumentally), treats non-human *difference* as inferiority, and understand both non-human agency and value in hegemonic terms that deny and subordinate them to a hyperbolized human agency (Plumwood 2003:53).<sup>21</sup>

Discussing the separation of people and nature, Plumwood (2003) writes critically about an 'othering' of non-human animals and 'hyper-separation', arguing that "centric and reductionistic modes of conceiving nature as Other continue to thrive" (Plumwood 2003:54). Socially constructing wildlife as 'other' informs management practice and policy today and, to redress this, Plumwood (2003:56) calls for a renaming and reconceptualising of non-humans as constituting the "more-than-human" (rather than less-than) world. Fuentes (2006:130) also argues against the dualism, claiming "there is humanity in animals ... (and) ... there is animality in humans."

Forms of 'othering' non-humans are the precursor of many forms of injustice in our relations with non-humans. "They prevent the conception of non-human others in ethical terms, distort our distributive relationships with the non-human, and legitimate insensitive commodity and instrumental approaches" (Plumwood

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<sup>20</sup> The implication here is not that traditional Western thought is the only arena in which human superiority over nature is contrived. As Fennell (2008) notes, in his paper on the 'myth of indigenous stewardship', the claim that indigenous people have a stronger conservation ethic than other people is, at best, "provocative" (p140).

<sup>21</sup> For further information on ethics, tourism and wildlife see, for example, Fennell (2006), Fennell and Malloy (2007), and Smith (2003).

2003:54). They allow us to manage in ways that seek to control, and even destroy, nature for the protection of people.

Hyper-separation, as defined by Plumwood (2003:54), involves more than just recognising difference between humans and others. “Hyper-separation means defining the dominant identity emphatically against, or in opposition to, the subordinated identity, by exclusion of their real or supposed qualities. The function of hyper-separation is to mark out the Other for separate and inferior treatment” (Plumwood 2003:54).

She further argues that:

Human nature and human identity are treated as hyper-separated from, or ‘outside’ of, nature, and are assumed to exist in a hyper-separate sphere of ‘culture’. ... Nature and culture represent two quite different orders of being, with nature (especially as pure nature) representing the inferior and inessential one. The human sphere of ‘culture’ is supposedly an order of ethics and justice, which apply not to the non-human sphere but only within the sphere of culture (Plumwood 2003:56).

In practice, what does this separation mean? Alger and Alger (1999:203-4) demonstrate that the distancing of nonhuman from human animals in this way serves powerful interests, at least in western cultures. As a consequence of ideological separation “we can experiment on them, eat them and use them for our entertainment, and exploit them in countless other ways that industrial economies, sanctioned by Cartesian science, have devised” (Milton 2005:264). Constructed as separate and inferior, animals are seen as resources for dominant superior humans to rationalise, understand, control and subdue (Suchet 2001:129), without the impediment of moral sensibilities (Milton 2005:264).

In the culture/nature dualism discussed above, humans occupy the sphere of culture and non-humans the sphere of nature. Wildlife then is encompassed in the sphere of nature,<sup>22</sup> as something lacking culture and therefore also lacking a higher level of consciousness.

This dualism of humans and nature is not the only perspective associated with protected areas and wildlife. Other perspectives see nature and humans more closely aligned, for example in views of ecosystems management where people and nature are seen as part of a shared ecosystem (Meffe *et al.* 2006). Much of the disciplines of landscape ecology, and landscape geography, see people and nature as part of a shared landscape (Head 2000a, 2000b). Nevertheless, the ontological spheres marked out by the dualism, and what they mean for the way interactions between people and wildlife are managed, are particularly pertinent to the case studies, as will be addressed throughout the remainder of the thesis.

### **6.3.1 Anthropomorphism**

Anthropomorphism is the use of characteristics defined as exclusively human to describe or explain nonhuman animals (Horowitz and Bekoff 2007:23). It can attribute human qualities to animals as it interprets reality exclusively in the terms of human values and experience (Bradshaw and Casey 2007).<sup>23</sup> Anthropomorphism “has long been considered a bad word in science” (Clutton-Brock 2005:958), but remains enduringly popular (Horowitz and Bekoff 2007:31). The history of

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<sup>22</sup> From a constructivist perspective, wildlife can also be seen as symbolic of nature (which further establishes its place in the realm of nature rather than culture).

<sup>23</sup> Milton (2005) argues very convincingly against the concept of anthropomorphism, suggesting that ‘egomorphism’ is a more appropriate, and less misleading, model for analysing how human animals understand non-human ones. Nevertheless I will retain use of the word anthropomorphism as it remains more widely used and understood.

anthropomorphism, and current debates about it, are worthy of attention because, as I will demonstrate, the avoidance of anthropomorphism can be seen as a further tool used by humans to conceptually distance themselves from other animals species and is frequently evident in wildlife tourism management.

Mithen (1996) suggests that the beginnings of anthropomorphic thinking can be dated to 40 000 years ago when it may have assisted early hunters to predict the behaviours of their prey. Fisher (1996) similarly suggests there may be an evolutionary explanation for our tendency to anthropomorphise. The label itself, however, only came into being around the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the onset of behaviourism, and quickly became considered a pejorative term (Clutton-Brock 2005:958). As Horowitz and Bekoff (2007:23) describe:

In studies of animals' behaviour, there is near official consensus about anthropomorphising: it is to be avoided. While the term literally refers to the characterisation of nonhuman behaviour or inanimate objects in human terms, it has been further appropriated to refer to such characterisation specifically when it is *erroneous* [their emphasis].

Despite this very negative association, which prompted Milton (2005:257) to ask “What is wrong with ‘anthropomorphism’?,” it has had some very well respected supporters. Charles Darwin anthropomorphised when he used “mentalistic terms” to describe animals he observed (Wynne 2004:606). When Konrad Lorenz began his studies of animal behaviour in the 1930s, marking the beginnings of ethology as a science, he used anthropomorphic language to relate the ways of animals to the ways of people (Clutton-Brock 2005:958). Frans de Waal (2001) remains a strong supporter of the view, developed with cognitive ethology, that anthropomorphism does not necessarily disrupt scientific observation and can in fact support the continuity between humans and animals.

Nevertheless, the arguments for and against the humanising of animals in science persist. Wynne (2004:606), for example, asserts that “anthropomorphism is not a well developed scientific system ... its hypotheses are generally nothing more than informal folk psychology.” Arguing against a perceived recent move towards greater acceptance of anthropomorphism by some scientists, Wynne maintains that “the reintroduction of anthropomorphism risks bringing back the dirty bathwater as we rescue the baby” (2004:606). This sentiment is shared by J. Kennedy (1992) who writes about the need to resist returning to the damaging delusions of anthropomorphism. Meanwhile, Horowitz and Bekoff (2007), examining how and why we anthropomorphise, suggest a means to analyse the behaviour and see anthropomorphic accounts as “intelligible and practical” guides to understanding animals (p32).

There are also many who write on the topic but retain a neutral stance. Epley, Waytz and Cacioppo (2007), for example, developed a three-factor theory about why people anthropomorphise without taking sides in the debate about the merits of it for either animals or people. An edited book by Daston and Mitman (2005) begins with the premise that although anthropomorphism might be a scientific sin it can be remarkably useful for people. My argument here is that it might also be useful for animals, as will be discussed.

De Waal (2001) proposed a label for the opposite of anthropomorphism, which I will adopt. It is ‘anthropodenial,’ and refers to the rejection of shared characteristics between people and animals. An understanding of this issue is very pertinent to the examination of wildlife tourism in this thesis, as will later be discussed.

## 6.4 Conclusion

Having established the relationships between wildlife tourism, colonialism and conservation, we are faced with the challenge of finding the right balance between providing for the needs of people and protecting nature (Brecht 2003:ix). Certainly this would not seem to have been in balance before, where models of management based on the separation of people and wildlife have then imposed a hierarchy that prioritised one sphere over another.

Consequently, it was necessary to examine the different values we place on wildlife, usually based on their use to us as people. These utilitarian values may vary from one culture to another and, as demonstrated, European values were seen to have been underpinned by and emerged from European colonialism (Adams and Mulligan 2003b:291). “The ‘enlightenment values’ that emerged at this time continue to underpin the dominant utilitarian attitudes towards non-human nature” (Adams and Mulligan 2003b:292), and this has been carried forward into contemporary policy and practice.

The way wildlife has been viewed over time has changed, and this may provide us with some answers for how best to balance needs. For example, in the 1950s and 1960s “wildlife came to be presented as a critical resource for development” (Adams 2003a:27). As early as 1961 the deputy director-general of the UK government’s Nature Conservancy recognised that “wildlife is a large natural resource in its own right, capable of development to big sustained yields by the application of appropriate technology” (Worthington 1961 in Adams 2003a:27-8). And, “At the hands of colonial engineers, wild nature was brought under control, its power

harnessed ... to serve the grand purposes of colonial development” (Adams 2003a: 24).

It could be argued that people have always, in all places, sought to control nature to some extent. We certainly continue to do it today in our interactions with wildlife, and key ways this manifests are through separating people and wildlife and through engaging in anthropodenial. Controlling nature remains important in the contemporary context, as will be demonstrated in the case studies, and the ideas raised in this chapter will form part of the following analysis of the interactions between people and wildlife.

The second section of this thesis has reviewed the relevant literature and set up the theoretical framework. Understanding how anthropology has dealt with tourism and the environment, and how these overlap, provides us with knowledge to move forward in to the world of wildlife tourism. The following section, Section Three, analyses the two case studies which were introduced in Chapter Two.





# SECTION THREE:

## CONSIDERING CASE STUDIES

### AND ANALYSING DATA

Having set the scene for the empirical research and explained the existing literature within which the topic is situated, the case studies are brought to the fore in this third section containing four chapters. Fraser Island, as the primary of the two cases, is the focus of the first two chapters. It is first examined in Chapter Seven as an example of wildlife management in a wildlife tourism setting. Part of the governing body's wildlife management is then analysed using a framework of social constructionism in Chapter Eight. Chapter Nine brings wildlife tourism on Penguin Island, as the more minor of the two case studies, back into consideration describing issues on the two islands and the different relationships between people and dingoes and people and penguins. In this, the difference in size of, and wildlife management complexity on, the two islands is highlighted. With a greater focus on analysis, Chapter Ten returns to the key themes of separation, construction and anthropomorphism raised in Chapter Six and applies these to both cases.



SECTION THREE: CONSIDERING CASE  
STUDIES AND ANALYSING DATA

CHAPTER SEVEN

**Managing Dingoes and People at the  
Interface of Wildlife Tourism on  
Fraser Island<sup>1</sup>**

**7.0 Introduction**

Fraser Island, its wildlife and some of the key stakeholders in this wildlife tourism community were introduced in Chapter Two. This case study, and in particular one significant event in the history of interactions between people and dingoes on the island, are now discussed as a way of examining both the relationships between stakeholders and some of the key management issues. The death of a nine year old boy on Fraser Island on 30 April 2001, as a consequence of a dingo attack, brought to public attention the issue of managing dingoes in a manner that is sustainable; fulfils agency responsibilities for public safety; satisfies community expectations for the management of an iconic Australian species; and is compatible with ideals of

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<sup>1</sup> Parts of this chapter have been previously published as Burns and Howard (2003).

wildlife based tourism. Examination of this event, and key issues surrounding it for the wildlife tourism community, provide us with the background to deconstruct management strategies in Chapter Eight.

This chapter examines a range of stakeholder perspectives of dingoes as a form of wildlife tourism on Fraser Island, and discusses human-dingo interaction on the island to provide a context for the current management situation. As such, it draws heavily on interview material. Perspectives of the many different stakeholders that constitute Fraser Island's wildlife tourism community reflect a diversity of opinions and attitudes:

*It's all pretty straight forward really. The tourists are stupid. The residents short-sighted. The dogs starving. The rangers, who don't know how to look after the island, are over-worked and under-funded. And the government doesn't give a damn ... until somebody dies that is, and then they only give a damn about their political future.*

This statement, drawn from a compilation of several voices, summarises, in a very simplified form, some of the key stakeholder attitudes. The important issues it raises are addressed in this chapter. If wildlife tourism is essentially "about increasing the probability of positive encounters with wildlife for visitors whilst protecting the wildlife resource" (Reynolds and Braithwaite 2001:31), then events concerning the management of dingoes on Fraser Island would seem to be in conflict with this essential nature of wildlife tourism.

## **7.1 The Fraser Island Dingo as Tourist Attraction**

Symbols of the dingo have been used extensively to market Fraser Island as a destination for domestic and international tourists (Peace 2001:175, Figure 9.2). Although Fraser Island as a tourist destination is made up of many attraction

resources, images of dingoes are featured on the majority of brochures, and on many web pages and postcards promoting Fraser Island. An underlying suggestion presented by these images is that a visitor to the island might reasonably expect positive interactions with dingoes to be part of the visit experience.

For most visitors, dingoes are part of the Fraser Island experience, with other significant icons such as the Maheno ship wreck, Lake Mackenzie and migrating whales:

*I guess it would be disappointing if I didn't see one, but it wouldn't be the end of the world ('John', Male Camper at Waddy Point, June 2001).*

*I expect to see dingoes, ... obviously ('Mandy', Female Camper at Central Station, June 2001).*

*There's a number of icons to Fraser. The dingoes are one of them. ... the dingoes are big, we feature them on a lot of our marketing material ('Warren', Tourism Sector Employee, September 2001).*

The dingoes have not been marketed as a particular type of tourism product<sup>2</sup> which may be illustrative of the vagueness of this product. One of the requirements imposed on Fraser Island is that tourist interaction with dingoes is non-consumptive,<sup>3</sup> by virtue of the fact that it occurs within a National Park and World Heritage Area where the dingo remains a protected species. Peace (2001) notes that the nature of Fraser Island is sold as safe, friendly and predictable, and that dingoes are part of this package. It was not until some negative interactions between humans and dingoes in the late 1990s that the dingoes' image changed a little. Even then, the

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<sup>2</sup> For a list of categories into which wildlife tourism can be placed see Reynolds and Braithwaite (2001:33-34).

<sup>3</sup> Where 'consumptive' tourism involves deliberate destruction of the wildlife through hunting or fishing, for example.

majority of symbols<sup>4</sup> continued to portray this animal as a harmless and friendly, fun-loving dog.

## **7.2 History of Human-Dingo Interaction on Fraser Island**

Before commencing an examination of contemporary interactions between people and dingoes on Fraser Island it is useful to briefly reflect on the history of these interactions. This enables us to not only understand the background to current interactions but also how interactions, and management responses to them, have changed over time.

Aboriginal groups interacted with dingoes across the Australian continent in a variety of different ways (Meggitt 1965). Dingoes were used to assist with hunting (Finlayson 1935, Pickering 1992, Thomson 1949), were understood as conscious beings with whom Aboriginals communicated on personal and tribal scales (Suchet 2001:130), and in some cases the pups were raised like members of the human family (Lumholtz 1884). An Aboriginal elder recalled memories from her childhood on Fraser Island when women would suckle dingo puppies and those puppies would grow up to guard and protect the human family, even protecting human children from other dingoes (*'Racheal', Aboriginal Elder, September 2001*).<sup>5</sup> Thus, for many Aboriginal communities, dingoes were “a utility as well as a pet” and their

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<sup>4</sup> Symbols, such as the picture of a dingo puppy on a t-shirt being sold on ferries and a poster used to advertise Kingfisher Bay Resort and Village to backpackers, perpetuate the image of dingoes as cute and not dangerous. The only variation to this seems to be recent educational/interpretative material produced by QPWS (discussed later), which depicts more aggressive images of dingoes with exposed teeth.

<sup>5</sup> Corbett (1995:21) also notes that “some, such as Aborigines in Australia ... even suckled young pups.”

importance in Aboriginal culture has been recorded in rock art and cave paintings (Corbett 1995:19).<sup>6</sup>

Despite this form of Aboriginal interaction with dingoes it is still widely believed by Europeans that dingoes are not as suitable for pets as the domesticated dog:

*I think the fact that they are still a wild animal makes people think that we haven't bred that out of them. ... they've still got that wild streak in them, you can never trust them ('Len', Wildlife Manager, June 2001).*

*There are residents on the island that reckon they are pets so would probably still feed them. I don't think that's a very good idea because the dingo being a hunting animal, has a leader of the pack and they all follow through. It's the leader of the pack now that's probably been in trouble and got himself, got his fingers burnt for doing that, and it's the next one in line that's probably going to come along and be another problem in 12 months' time ('Fred', Tourism Sector Employee, September 2001).*

*National Parks are trying to get them to go back to what they were, a native wild dog. ... But when the dingoes first came to Fraser Island they were brought here by the Aborigines as their pets and so the Aborigines fed them whatever scraps were left over from their food ('Sarah', Island Resident, September 2001).*

During the years when Fraser Island was used as a venue for extensive sand mining and logging, the presence of dingoes was of little national consequence and use of the island for these forms of economic revenue was not dependent on the island's wildlife. This does not mean, however, that there was no interaction between humans and dingoes during those years. Although mining and logging were dominant forms of use, tourism on a largely unregulated and small scale had commenced. There were also residents living on the island. Both of these

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<sup>6</sup> See Meggitt (1965) for a comprehensive overview of the relationships between dingoes and Aboriginal people throughout different parts of Australia.



stakeholder groups recall accounts of befriending dingoes and of dingoes stealing food, such as fishing bait or garbage (*'Laurie', Island Resident, August 2001*).

Since World Heritage listing in 1991 tourism has changed dramatically on the island. Fraser Island is one of seventeen World Heritage sites in Australia and while “inclusion of a place on the World Heritage list can constrain developers, ... it can also produce tourist booms” (Baker 1996:41). For Fraser Island, the pattern of boom was clearly followed, as illustrated in Appendix 1. Increasing tourist numbers has coincided with an increasing number of interactions between tourists and dingoes (EPA 2006:11). Wildlife managers equate these typically benign interactions with dingoes losing their fear of humans (EPA 2001b:3), though several of my informants suggested this is a two-sided process with humans losing their fear of dingoes also being an important part of the equation.

### **7.3 Conflict Over Human-Dingo Interactions**

Attempts have been made, by QPWS and places such as Kingfisher Bay Resort and Village, to record negative interactions (which they refer to as ‘incidents’) with dingoes on the island. Between 1996 and 2001, 279 incidents were reported across the island of which 74 were rated ‘insignificant’, 70 were rated ‘minor’, 95 ‘moderate’, 39 ‘major’ and one ‘catastrophic’ (EPA 2001c: attachment 8). An Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) study conducted in 1995 (2001b:5) showed that at least 10 percent of visitors reported a negative interaction with dingoes on their visit to Fraser Island. This leaves a potential 90 percent with positive experiences of dingoes, yet this remains unreported.

The fatality does not seem to have been a threat to the tourism industry on Fraser Island. In June 2001, for example, the popular Lake Mackenzie camp ground was still typically full. Resorts reported a decrease in numbers in some types of tourists, for example a school group cancelled at Kingfisher Bay Resort and Village, but also some increase, for example, people choosing to stay at resorts instead of camping or cancelling their holiday. Although Appendix 1 shows a decrease in annual tourist number on Fraser Island since 2002, there is no proof that this is connected with the fatality. The terrorist attack in New York also took place in 2001, resulting in a decrease in tourism numbers worldwide.

When I asked tourists and visitors if the fatal attack had changed their travel plans, few said it had. In fact, one family comprised of two adults and three children said they felt safer since the fatality because of the additional ranger presence on the island. Of course, I did not speak to those who were not there.

## **7.4 Dingo Management**

Dependence on human foods leading to habituation of dingoes is largely considered the foundation for negative interactions between humans and dingoes (EPA 2001b: 5). Both direct and indirect feeding of dingoes is strongly discouraged and transgressors face heavy penalties.<sup>7</sup> However, this has not always been the case. As one long-term resident stated:

*I have a photo of a sign from down at Central Station that says 'please throw all your food scraps into the bush to feed the dingoes' ... It's probably about 20 years old. But that was what the sign said ('Sarah', Island Resident, September 2001).*

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<sup>7</sup> For a discussion of issues surrounding the feeding of wildlife as a tourism attraction see Ballantyne and Hughes (2006), Biel (2006), Green (2005), Orams (2002), Roe *et al.* (2007), Semeniuk *et al.* (2007) and Smith *et al.* (in press).

Prior to the fatality, a *draft Fraser Island dingo management strategy* (EPA 1999b) existed for the island.<sup>8</sup> Although the plan had been in draft form for two years and had yet to be formally adopted, many QPWS rangers claimed key strategies were already being implemented. Impetus for drafting the plan may have come from the large number of dingo attacks in the late 1990s.<sup>9</sup>

Accessing newspaper articles from 1998 and 1999, Peace notes the concern that “marauding and scavenging animals would shortly constitute a major threat to the multi-million dollar tourist industry” (2001:187). For the sake of the industry then, the threat had to be removed. This highlights one of the inherent conflicts in wildlife tourism. Where wildlife is only part of the tourism attraction, as on Fraser Island and in many national parks around the world, it can threaten the viability of the whole tourism industry at that location.

The lack of a formally adopted strategy throughout the 1990s did not mean that QPWS had not been managing the dingoes. The closure of dumps on the island in 1993, for example, was at least in part a measure to curb indirect feeding of dingoes. QPWS rangers had also been ‘culling’ (killing by shooting)<sup>10</sup> individual dingoes identified as exhibiting problem behaviour.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> This is not the only management strategy pertinent to Fraser Island devised by the EPA. A *Fraser Island World Heritage Area draft Camping Management Plan* (EPA 1999a) and the *Great Sandy Region Management Plan 1994-2010* (EPA 2005a) for example, also exist.

<sup>9</sup> For information on these attacks, and their publicisation, see Lawrence and Higginbottom (2001) and Peace (2001).

<sup>10</sup> EPA documents (1999b, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c, 2006) describe the killing of dingoes as them being either ‘culled’ or ‘destroyed’ in a widely utilised management language that sanitises what is actually taking place.

<sup>11</sup> For a description of “dangerous animals” adopted by the EPA, and the selection criteria used to identify dingoes before they are destroyed see EPA (2001b:12) and EPA (2006:37-40).

The death of a child, killed by dingoes on Fraser Island in April 2001, changed the way dingoes and people, and their interactions, are managed on the island, and this has implications for the continuation of this form of wildlife tourism. According to the EPA, this event “dramatically redefined the risk that dingoes pose to humans” because it proved “that the most severe outcome, namely a human death, is possible” (2001b:x). That such an outcome was possible was doubted by few of my interviewees:

*It's something that's been predicted ... I felt sick in the guts basically ('Brian', Tourism Sector Employee, June 2001).*

*If someone asked me 'do you think a dingo could do it', I'd say 'yes' but the bit that got me was the fact that it was such an old child and such a young dog. I always imagined that it would have been a older dog on a baby, maybe two or three years old ('Roger', Wildlife Manager, June 2001).*

*I think most people on the island probably expected it to happen, but not to a ten year old. I think they thought that if it was going to happen, it would be to a two to three year old, ... Just shocked - yes shit, it's happened ('Ted', Tourism Sector Employee, June 2001).*

A risk assessment was undertaken shortly following the fatality, and a report prepared in May 2001 (EPA 2001c). The finalised *Fraser Island dingo management strategy* (FIDMS) document was released in November 2001 (EPA 2001b), incorporating recommendations from the risk assessment report, and a review of this was released in 2006 (EPA 2006). The 2001 FIDMS document contains seven strategies, and includes a section on “managing dingo-human interaction” which states (2001b:10) “the dingo-human interaction will be managed by increasing Island-wide facilities and services that discourage dingoes from interacting with the people”. This document, and its strategies, are deconstructed in the following chapter.

### 7.4.1 The Immediate Cull

Following the fatal attack, the immediate and very public response was a cull of more than just the two dingoes involved in the attack. In total, 31 dingoes were killed in the following month (EPA 2001b:3)<sup>12,13</sup> and in terms of stakeholders' voices the immediate cull is the easiest issue to discuss. It evoked a consensual voice in that none fully supported it. For example:

*Oh my God, this has happened, ... on the island where I work, so I suddenly felt quite afraid for the dingoes because ... I suspected that something quite bad was going to happen as a result and it did - the dingoes were culled, 31 to be exact. My reaction after that started happening was that it was a very kneejerk reaction, I don't know if you want me to continue with this. I felt quite sick. I did feel that it was quite a kneejerk reaction, the culling of those dingoes. I'm glad it's settled down now, I was in fear for the entire population of the dingoes for a while there ('Neil', Tourism Sector Employee, June 2001).*

*We are very much part of the problem and I don't think the dingoes are at fault. Parks [QPWS] is bloody culling them but they're a part of the attraction here too. You can't just cull them ... When you go swimming in the ocean and there's sharks in the ocean that's their territory. This is dingoes territory. It's a rare thing to see wildlife and you don't want to see it killed, it's a real special thing ('Alex', Resort Guest, June 2001).*

*It should never have happened ... It was wrong, they shouldn't have ever done that. Most of the dingo attacks, prior to that little boy, were dogs that were either taunted or they were being fed and they wanted more food. There was an incident reported where an English backpacker got bitten at Lake Mackenzie. What they didn't report was that five minutes before she was bitten she had been feeding that dog*

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<sup>12</sup> The exact number of dingoes on Fraser Island is unknown. The EPA (2001c:3) estimated the population as between 100 and 200 at the time of the cull.

<sup>13</sup> This figure (31) was widely cited by many of the stakeholders, although some told me fewer dingoes had been killed and others believed there had been more. Trigger *et al.* (in press), for example, state that 65 dingoes were killed, but do not cite a source for this figure. Given the conservation imperative (EPA 2006:3) and low total population number of dingoes on the island, the total number destroyed in the initial cull is very unlikely to be this high.

*steak. She ran out of steak so the dog bit her, so come on, be fair, be fair to the dingoes. Then what happened was the National Parks went round and they shot anything they saw walking on four legs ('Sarah', Island Resident, September 2001).*

*It's sad, it's the biggest tragedy. ... That makes me really angry. I see all these t-shirts, they're all flogging the dingo. I mean, that's what makes me so angry, because they use the wild animal and when his life is at stake, which is no fault of his, it's not the dingo's fault. That's what I'm keep trying to say, it's not the dingo's fault that's happened here, it's the government and the people and the tourists ('Racheal', Indigenous Elder, September 2001).*

*It was Mr Beattie [the then Premier of Queensland] seen to be doing something, something grand because this has happened. That's all he's achieved, he hasn't achieved anything else other than getting rid of x number of dingoes, pure Australian dingo from Fraser Island ('Sarah', Island Resident, September 2001).*

*I don't think they should cull dingoes. The culling afterwards was, I heard (on the radio) 'it wasn't a kneejerk reaction, it was a jerk reaction' ('Warren', Tourism Sector Employee, September 2001).*

*It's totally wrong ... I think they should cull the people who fed them personally - I think that's the real source of the problem ('Leanne', Female Camper at Waddy Point, June 2001).*

*It definitely wasn't the case of some rangers advocating the cull and some rangers completely against it, it was more of a case of some rangers definitely didn't like it and some rangers just accepted it ('Roger', Wildlife Manager, June 2001).*

As noted by others, “the short-term economic benefits often appear to take a central role in wildlife resource management ... and non-economic values ... are more difficult to measure” (Reynolds and Braithwaite 2001:37). In this case, the presence of human-life-threatening dingoes could have been a threat to Fraser Island’s tourism, which is not solely wildlife-based. Perhaps the cull could occur because the dingo on its own is not seen as crucial for tourism on Fraser Island. As mentioned

previously, the dingo is part of an overall package and rarely singly responsible for tourist visitation to the island.

Government support for the cull may also have been motivated by the fear of being sued. In 2001, an English tourist sought \$250 000 in damages from the Queensland Government for injuries she received from a dingo attack on Fraser Island in May 1998 (Jones 2001:4). And, as we are reminded by Peace (2001:187), Lindy and Michael Chamberlain “received a compensation payment of \$1.3 million from the Northern Territory Government” that was considered a modest recompense for their legal and other expenses (Wilson 1999:13).<sup>14</sup>

Perhaps there was also an expectation that a cull would not stop tourists visiting the island but that the continued presence of dingoes might. This supports the idea that dingoes on their own are not seen as a significant drawcard for the tourist dollar.

The government directive to wildlife managers to kill dingoes was the initial response to the fatality. Wildlife managers were keen to point out that culling is only one of numerous strategies they have for managing problem dingoes.

#### **7.4.2 Fencing**

The idea of fencing some key tourist areas to prevent human-dingo interaction was raised after the fatality: “Dingo barrier fences are being or will be constructed at selected high risk picnic or camping grounds” (EPA 2001b:10). This proposal met with little strong support from the people I interviewed. Most opposition came from

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<sup>14</sup> Azaria Chamberlain, a nine-week-old baby, is the only other human death attributed in a dingo attack in Australia. She disappeared from Uluru in 1980 and her mother was initially jailed for her murder before being released (Marcus 1989, Summers 2005).

a perception that the fences were unlikely to be effective, and may reduce human accessibility of the areas.

*Well you can't really fence them out ... they'll get in ('Mark', Male Camper, Waddy Point, June 2001).*

*You could fence the park area off but then someone has only got to leave a bloody gate open once haven't they? Every camping area, like the parks area, would have to be fenced which is a big job. They've got enough to do without worrying about fences too haven't they? I think we've just got to teach the poor old dog that he's not a pet, he's not there to be patted on the shoulder ('Neville', Island Resident, September 2001).*

*You can't just say, "there is a problem when dingoes and humans interact so let's put a fence between them". Sounds great in theory, but in practice it's never going to work because you're not solving all the issues that have led to the problem ('Ted', Tourism Sector Employee, June 2001).*

Fencing, however, did eventuate (EPA 2006:12) and many campgrounds and day use areas (such as Dilli Village and Lake Mckenzie), and some resorts (such as Kingfisher Bay Resort and Village) are now enclosed by fences. In September 2007, the Premier of Queensland, Anna Bligh, announced that the state government would spend a further \$750 000 on fencing (Herald Sun 2007) and the resultant six-foot high wire fences constructed around Happy Valley and Eurong townships are vehemently opposed by many local residents (Callinan 2008, Sunshine Coast Daily 2008). These enclosures are reasonably successful in keeping dingoes out and thus minimising human-dingo interactions (EPA 2006:30). However, removal of a predator species from these areas has allowed other species such as snakes and rodents to flourish ('Laurie', Island Resident, 2006) and poses new challenges for management on the island. The issue of fencing is discussed further in Chapter Eight.



### 7.4.3 Hazing

Hazing, as defined by the EPA, means “any of the non-lethal methods used to deter dingoes from frequenting an area and to re-instil in them a fear of humans, i.e. avoidance behaviour” (EPA 2006:45). It is a means of “harassing dingoes by way of irritation” (EPA 2001b:11), and the types of harassment include clay or marble balls projected from a sling-shot (EPA 2006:35), ‘ratshot’ fired from rifles, and the use of stockwhips (EPA 2001b:13). In September 2001, a sign in the toilet block at the Waddy Point camp ground alerted campers to fact that local rangers were using hazing (in the form of shooting dingoes with pellets). Such hazing forms part of the actions employed to implement Strategy 4 of *the Fraser Island dingo management strategy*.<sup>15</sup> The appropriateness, and effectiveness of hazing again met with mixed responses from stakeholders interviewed. Some declared it was cruel, while several commented that because dingoes were very clever they would quickly learn to avoid people wearing ranger uniforms.

While these types of measures (fencing, hazing, culling) are important when managing dingoes, on their own they are not enough. As recognised in the current strategy (EPA 2001b), there is also a need to manage humans.

## 7.5 Human Management

In interviews I asked ‘how do you manage dingoes?’, and found that the majority of respondents considered it more important to manage people:

*I would say it's a 100% human problem. You've heard of the term wildlife management - wildlife don't need managing, people need managing ('Ted', Tourism Sector Employee, June 2001).*

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<sup>15</sup> For further information on hazing on Fraser Island see EPA (2006:35-36).

[How do you go about managing dingoes?] *By managing people in this situation. You can't really manage the dingoes, they manage themselves. If we leave them alone, they'll do a good job of it* ('Bill', *Wildlife Manager*, June 2001).

*One of the main problems is people, .... We are very much part of the problem* ('Angus', *Male camper, Waddy Point*, June 2001).

*You can't really blame the dingo for it, can you? It's our fault* ('Neville', *Island Resident*, September 2001).

The need to manage people is by no means a new idea, yet it remains a neglected one. In 1966, for example, Aldo Leopold noted that “the problem with game management is not how we shall handle the deer – the real problem is one of human management” (p197). Duffus and Deardon (1993) claim that for management to be successful “both human and ecological dimensions must be understood, and balanced, in the planning stages.” Where this has not been done adequately, as seems to be the case on Fraser Island, it falls into the trap noted by Duffus and Deardon (1993) that “to ignore either is to invite conflict that will result in degradation.”<sup>16</sup> How to balance managing people and managing wildlife is discussed in Chapter Ten (see also Burns, in press).

### **7.5.1 Who is the Problem?**

*The worst one was a tour operator at Lake Mackenzie feeding the dingoes there. That was probably the worst incident, because it's someone who should know better. Backpackers are the other bad ones: a bit of food on the ground, let's take a photo of it. I still think the best story is the backpacker who has a bit of food in his mouth, for the dingo to take it out of his mouth* ('Ted', *Tourism Sector Employee*, June 2001).

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<sup>16</sup> Knight (2000a) tells us that conflict between people and wildlife is “ubiquitous” (p1), “universal” and takes many forms (p2).

As noted, the increase in visitor numbers to the island has been paralleled by an increase in the recorded number of 'dingo incidents.' However, the problem rests not just with the number of tourists, but in what those tourists are doing. On the occasions I visited the island there were few visible dingoes, which may suggest the strategies employed by QPWS are successful in minimising human-dingo interaction. This gave me little opportunity to witness such interactions; however, I was able to gather stories about interactions that had occurred both prior to the fatality and proceeding cull, and since these events. For example, a fellow researcher on the island saw a group of young male backpackers hand-feeding sausages to dingos at Lake Mackenzie in 2000. When the tourists tired of the interaction they had instigated, they threw beer cans at the dingoes to scare them away (Hadwen, pers. comm. 2001).<sup>17</sup>

The first group of stakeholders to be identified as exhibiting problem behaviour by other members of the wildlife tourism community were often backpackers:

*First time tourists. That's your problem - tourists. The regulars know the problem and stick to the rules but the tourists that are here think 'that looks cute - if I find a bit of food I'll give it to them to get a better shot'. They're hopeless ('Sean', Male Camper at Waddy Point, June 2001).*

*[Backpackers] They're trashing the place. I think that's another thing, like a lot of them come over here and hire a four-wheel-drive as a group and everything and it's hard for some of them to understand how important it is to really protect this place ('Ron', Male Camper at Waddy Point, June 2001).*

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<sup>17</sup> Smith *et al.* (in press), in their study of interactions between tourists and dolphins in a wildlife tourism setting, similarly found that interactions that posed a risk to human safety were more likely to be initiated by the tourists than the wildlife.

However, backpackers were certainly not the only group identified. Interviewees tended to blame other stakeholders for problem behaviour. For example, tourists identified other types of tourists; campers singled out backpackers, fishers singled out campers, and backpackers singled out people in resorts. This blaming of the 'other' is exemplified by the fact that no-one I spoke to said they had ever fed, or would ever feed, a dingo, even campers or fishers who had been visiting the island for several years. However, many said they had seen others feed dingoes.

In addition, QPWS rangers identified tourists, mostly backpackers, and residents as being responsible for inappropriate interactions with dingoes. Residents blamed tourists, firstly backpackers, and rangers. Residents also said they had never fed dingoes, which was an interesting consensual voice within this stakeholder group. No one told me they had ever fed even though some lived in close proximity to dingoes, reporting dingoes sleeping on their verandahs, travelling in their cars and playing with their children. Some even had names for individual dingoes.

While I am concerned about the approach that seeks to eliminate all interactions (both positive and negative) between humans and dingoes, I do not dispute there is a need to minimise negative interactions, both for the sake of the humans and the sake of the dingoes. To achieve this there is a need to manage dingoes and manage people (Burns, in press). However, it has long been noted that while "Wildlife management is comparatively easy; human management is difficult" (Leopold 1966:197).

Historically, governing bodies such as QPWS have been less focussed on managing people and more focussed on managing wildlife, as their title would suggest. However, parks are about people and as wildlife tourism increases, such

organisations will face management issues that require increasing dealings with people. Consequently, in Chapter Ten, I make suggestions about how the management of wildlife, people, and their interactions in wildlife tourism settings, might be reassessed.

### **7.5.2 Stakeholder Conflict**

*In terms of the head rangers and the rangers themselves, ... some of them are OK, but most of them pretty much have the attitude “we're not really interested in commercial concerns, we're here as the protectors of this resource and we're going to treat you with the contempt you deserve.” And that's certainly a common perception among tour operators, very common (‘Warren’, Tourism Sector Employee, September 2001).*

One of the key barriers to managing people appears to be the level of tension that exists between some of the stakeholder groups. This conflict is not new, perhaps having always been there, but the dingo issue seems to have exacerbated it on Fraser Island and it poses a challenge to sustainability.

Tensions can arise between tour operators and protected area managers, as exemplified by the quote above. On one side are the “operators seeking greater and closer access to wildlife” (Reynolds and Braithwaite 2001:40), and the desire for greater and closer access is blamed as the motivation behind feeding, feeding blamed for habituation, habituation blamed for loss of fear (of both dingoes of humans and humans of dingoes), and loss of fear blamed for the increased problem behaviours of both humans and dingoes.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> For a sequence of events believed to lead to an attack by a dingo on a human, see EPA (2001b:5).

On the other side are the “managers seeking to restrict access and increase the distance between visitors and wildlife” (Reynolds and Braithwaite 2001:40). Manager motivation for this stance comes from a desire to protect both the wildlife and the humans, as well as to decrease the likelihood of publicity over negative interactions. This kind of stance is based on the premise that interactions can only be negative, as reflected in EPA documents (2001a, 2001b, 2001c, 2006).

The most obvious conflict probably exists between QPWS and Fraser Island residents:

*It's more than a bubbling discontent, it's downright hostility to National Parks and management (Fraser Island resident quoted in The Australian newspaper 1/12/2001 (Wilson 2001)).*

This was very evident at a Fraser Island Association (FIA) annual general meeting held on the island in September 2001. One female resident was concerned that as a consequence of the fatality QPWS authority over the island could be expanded to include freehold areas, and thus they could “come into our homes and tell us what to do.”<sup>19</sup> This hostility is also evident in the Fraser Island Association (FIA) newsletters, and perhaps exemplified by the declaration of the Association that it is “for the protection of rights of residents and visitors of Fraser Island” (FIA 2006).

One of the strategies residents and QPWS disagree on is the allocation of areas where dingoes could be regularly fed. Some residents see this as a way of solving the problem of hungry dingoes scavenging for food and becoming aggressive:

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<sup>19</sup> Current legislation ensures that QPWS can not cull dingoes in the town sites on the island. However, the statement that “negotiations will be initiated with the Maryborough and Hervey Bay City Councils to establish co-operative management and enforcement arrangements across all tenures” (EPA 2001b:10) could be interpreted as seeking a change to this legislation and thus bringing actuality to the residents’ fears.

*I believe, and there's a number of us believe this, if they set up some form of feeding program, ... where they will get x amount of food, in a place, every day that will stop the problems ('Sarah', Island Resident, September 2001).*

However, this is a claim QPWS has strongly rejected: "A number of alternative management actions within the overall strategy were considered but rejected ... (including) establishing feeding stations to supplement the diet of those dingoes that are perceived by some people to be unnaturally malnourished" (EPA 2001b:6).

The need for feeding stations, according to some residents, arose because QPWS closed the rubbish dumps on the island, thus depriving the dingoes of a crucial food source. Differences of opinion on this strategy have also caused conflict between residents and QPWS.

*That was the end of the wild brumbies (feral horses) on the island, so there's another source of food gone for the dingoes, so what was left was the dumps. ... That was where the dingoes were being fed, so never at any time have these dingoes had to live off the land because they've been fed. We're going back generations so now all of a sudden, National Parks decide that all the rubbish that comes onto this island has to go off the island, so we lose our dumps and that was when we started to have problems with the dingoes because they needed food. You go back before those dumps were removed, we never saw a dingo in town here in daylight ... we've got dingoes now that will walk up onto the verandah of the resort there, they're hungry, they're looking for food. They're starving and National Parks attitude is, if they starve, well they'll die out or only the strongest will survive and then of course we had this incident up at Orchid Beach where that little boy was mauled. That was tragic, it should never have happened and if National Parks had done their job, that would never have happened ('Sarah', Island Resident, September 2001).*

*The big difference was when they closed the dump over the back. The dingoes used to feed at the dump. They'd be lying there under the trees and they weren't worrying about coming to the beach. The dumps got*

*closed, where do the hungry ones go, where the feed is ('Henry', Island Resident, September 2001).*

The overall perceived competency of QPWS by residents (that they are 'not good at doing much') is strongly related to the perceived competency of their handling of dingoes. The history of this conflict dates back some years as many residents think the island was better run by its previous managers, the Forestry Department.

This tension coin reflects a lack of understanding between stakeholder groups. Reynolds and Braithwaite (2001:40) pose this as a failure by each party to understand "the constraints and pressures on the other." As both QPWS and Fraser Island residents are key stakeholders when it comes to dingoes on Fraser Island, their relationship is crucial to the sustainability of wildlife tourism. It is therefore essential that these people cooperate, for the sustainability of the natural resources on the island and for the tourism that is dependent on those resources.

Summarising discussions of ways to control tourist interactions with wildlife, Reynolds and Braithwaite (2001:36) highlight three types of strategic methods: physical and regulatory methods, economic strategies, and educational strategies. They note that "these strategies generally seem to try to control the number of tourists, and are forms of regulating numbers of people to carrying capacity of a site, rather than the interaction itself" (Reynolds and Braithwaite 2001:36). That is, all three strategic approaches are aimed at regulating tourist numbers rather than tourist behaviour or interaction. They also aim to reduce interactions by keeping people and wildlife away from each other. This separation of people and wildlife is a common strategy in wildlife management, as noted in the previous chapter.



### 7.5.3 Limiting Visitor Numbers

On Fraser Island, one of the physical and regulatory methods that has long been discussed is to limit tourist numbers. “The possibility of limiting visitor numbers to the Island or at specific locations on the Island (including the imposition of time restrictions) will be investigated” (EPA 2001b:11, EPA 2006:34). While not yet ruling it out, QPWS have also not implemented this method and it is met with considerable opposition by some members of the wildlife tourism community (particularly those whose economic livelihood is connected with tourism on the island).

In general, tour operators react negatively to the proposal to limit tourist numbers, claiming that it is unnecessary:

*I don't believe in locking wilderness up, I don't believe in locking anything up. Because to me, it's like having a painting and putting it in a cupboard, it's not of any use to anyone ... I think a million people could visit Fraser Island a year and it would be sustainable definitely ('Warren', Tourism Sector Employee, September 2001).*

Residents also are generally against the idea of limiting tourist numbers. This reaction may be in part a response to the fact that many residents are engaged, either directly or indirectly, with the tourism industry on the island and thus have an interest in the income it generates.

*We've got a hell of a lot of room on the island ... even in the peak of the tourism season there is still plenty of room for people. We could still find places that we see no-one. I don't think the island has reached anywhere near its capacity ('Neville', Island Resident, September 2001).*

*[Limiting numbers would be] very hard to police. Tour operators want to make money, don't they? ('Henry', Island Resident, September 2001).*

*Who do you discriminate against? That's what it all comes to. That's what you call discrimination, who are they going to pick out? ('Justine', Island Resident, September 2001).*

In contrast, tourists greet the idea of a cap on visitor numbers much more enthusiastically. This more positive acceptance by individual tourists may stem from the fact that increased numbers of other tourists decrease the pleasure of their own experience. It is related to the individual perception that 'I am not the problem, but others are.'

*Get rid of the people altogether. The clearest way would be to stop people coming on the island ('Sean', Male Camper, Waddy Point, June 2001).*

*I'm a bit like, if they, from that day on, just sort of closed it off and said 'sorry no people allowed' and that would meant at that time I would never have seen Fraser Island, I would have thought, well fair enough ('Angela', Female Camper, Central Station, June 2001).*

#### **7.5.4 Education**

Educational strategies continue to be pursued (EPA 2006:24-29, 43), and since the fatality the proposal has been to further increase "public education ... to discourage inappropriate visitor behaviour" (EPA 2001b:8). Very few disagree with this strategy, although there are differences in opinion over forms the education should take and how it could be implemented most successfully. Some think the current education methods are satisfactory:

*The signs are good - the noticeboards and things are good. And there's a lot of information. I think it's good, that's the only way that you're going to educate people so in the future they won't have this sort of problem ('Claire', Female camper, Waddy Point, June 2001).*

*Just keep educating people that come onto the island. Educate people and use of enforced fines. They started fining people and it's hard to catch people in the act but if you do, make sure you enforce the fines. That's all you can do ('Ron', Male camper, Waddy Point, June 2001).*

Others are more despondent, recognising that although educational strategies have been in place for some time they did not prevent the fatality in April 2001:

*It's a matter of people understanding and educating the people, that the hardest thing they could ever do I suppose. The hardest thing to do is educate people ('Angela', Female camper, Central Station, June 2001).*

*The public education is the big thing with dingoes, it's not going to change overnight, but if you can educate people, and especially the non-feeding side of things I guess, people will probably be a lot more aware of dingoes. It was always said, ever since I've been coming up here, don't feed the dingoes ('Diane', Female camper, Central Station, June 2001).*

Following the fatality the EPA employed an external consultancy to evaluate their educational campaign and interpretive material on Fraser Island. The report by Beckmann and Savage (2003) concluded that EPA practice was equivalent to best practice in North American parks (QPWS 2003a, 2003b). Sustainability Minister, Andrew MacNamara, has since argued, however, that education programs have not succeeded in changing resident and visitor interactions with dingoes (Sunshine Coast Daily 2008).<sup>20</sup>

#### **7.5.5 Fear**

*Dingoes have been here for a long time and I think it's the people that are coming across, people are losing their fear of dingoes, people are behaving badly around dingoes, that has caused the whole problem ('Donna', Tourism Sector Employee, June 2001).*

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<sup>20</sup> Similar educational campaigns are undertaken in many national and international contexts. For an example of a study that evaluates the effectiveness of education programs aimed at reducing conflict between humans and bears see Gore *et al.* (2006a).

As previously stated, the EPA (2001b:3) blame dingoes loss of fear of people for the development of “aggressive tendencies and/or destructive behaviour.” This was announced by the then Queensland Premier, Peter Beattie, who said the State Government was determined to ensure such a tragic loss of life did not happen again: “Some dingoes on Fraser Island have lost their natural fear of humans because they have been fed by people” (EQ 2001).

Laurie, a long-time resident of Fraser Island, also believes that dingoes need to be made afraid of humans again: “They have lost their fear, and there is scientific support for this from Dr Corbett, and the Australian Mammals Curator at Melbourne’s Zoo” (*‘Laurie’, Island Resident, August 2001*). However, this loses sight of the fact that human-dingo interaction involves two actors, both humans and dingoes, and that interactions have occurred between these two for many thousands of years (as discussed in 7.2) without fear and without human fatalities. Nevertheless, strategies (such as hazing) have been implemented to force dingoes to fear humans, and fear as a management strategy is discussed further in Chapter Eight.

#### **7.5.6 Fines and Fees**

The economic strategy employed in an attempt to break the sequence of events leading to an attack was an increase in fines issued to island visitors and residents for inappropriate behaviour.

Tough new fines are among nine major recommendations in a dingo risk management assessment report prepared by QPWS. ... “These comprehensive and tough new measures are focused squarely on educating people against feeding dingoes, and punishing those who persist.” On-the-spot fines for feeding ... will increase to \$225. Maximum penalties for feeding ... will double from \$1500 to \$3000.

Individuals caught feeding dingoes will be directed to leave the island immediately and commercial operators caught feeding dingoes will lose their commercial tour operator permits (EQ 2001).

In this case, fines are used as an economic sanction aimed at modifying human behaviour. Visitors to the island also pay a fee to QPWS. Fraser Island is world renowned for its high quality nature experience, and recognised internationally as an ecotourism destination. Following the argument of Reynolds and Braithwaite (2001:39), that “the higher the quality of the experience the greater the need to pay should be,” it would not seem unreasonable for visitors to Fraser Island to pay more both for the privilege of being there and for any activities they undertake that harms the experience for others.

Reynolds and Braithwaite (2001:39) also argue that “the higher the impacts on the environment the greater the need to pay.” Fraser Island is recognised as a World Heritage Area because of its unique and fragile environment; therefore, the potential for impact is high. If a consequence of habituation of dingoes is that they are culled, then the human impact on this part of the environment is certainly high.

One reason given for why the *draft dingo management strategy* (EPA 1999b) had not been acted on sooner related to the lack of funding allocated to QPWS activities on Fraser Island:

*The heart of the issue I guess, is that there are not enough rangers on the island. For the whole island, there is something like 30 national park rangers with bugger-all infrastructure. Of course, they just don't have the time or the money to implement the procedures that are already there ('Ted', Tourism Sector Employee, June 2001).*

Funding for some activities has increased since 2001. However, limitations imposed by working on such a large island remained a major issue for QPWS staff at a conference I attended in 2006 on ‘the integrity of Fraser Island’.

#### **7.5.7 Co-existence**

The construction of management policies based on mechanisms like access permits, ... limiting access ..., limiting road development and the whole panoply of planning restrictions that governments have at their disposal are, by their nature and intent, not neutral in impact (Ryan 2002:18).

These types of planning mechanisms have social implications that involve control over communities (Ryan 2002:18). It is this control that is objected to by the residents and other stakeholders of Fraser Island.

The conflict between residents and QPWS is part of the dingo management problem, and this conflict itself stems from the different tenure systems existing on Fraser Island. Despite the island being part National Park (Great Sandy) and part World Heritage Area, people still live on the island. This situation occurs on the mainland also, where park boundaries border on residential areas, and it has long been recognised that park problems (therefore management) do not begin and end at park boundaries.

The need to look for ways to empower stakeholders and make them more satisfied with the processes of management was discussed in Chapter Five. On Fraser Island, this could happen through their increased involvement in decision making and participation in strategic planning,<sup>21</sup> which may alleviate some of the tension caused by an approach that is viewed by some as exclusionary, and top down. This view

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<sup>21</sup> See Higginbottom and Scott (2004) for a discussion on strategic planning for wildlife tourism.

exists despite the EPA having in place a Scientific Advisory Committee and a Community Advisory Committee for the island. “Conservation is only as strong as its community support” (Reynolds and Braithwaite 2001:32) and thus those seeking to manage for the betterment of conservation need to encourage community support. One way to get that support is through effective involvement of the wildlife tourism community.

There is also a need for people and dingoes, and for people and other forms of wildlife, to coexist on Fraser Island. This is particularly important if tourism, especially wildlife tourism, is to remain viable in this location. If problems between people and dingoes persist, and dingoes continue to be killed, then it is also of vital importance to the dingoes.

These issues facing Fraser Island are not isolated or unique, and are likely to be of increasing importance in the future. According to Ryan (2002:23), a current issue in tourism relates to the fact that “government bodies need to recognise that existing governmental mechanisms for the representation of stakeholders may be insufficient.” Although Ryan recognises the problem, he also notes there is no quick solution, “In short, there are no easy answers, but neither is failure to recognise the issues an answer” (Ryan 2002: 24).

## **7.6 Conclusion**

The records suggest that dingo ‘incidents’ on Fraser Island have increased over recent years, and continue despite the measures implemented following the release of the FIDMS in 2001. Applying a cause and effect model, the most obvious thing that has also changed in those years is the parallel increase in number of visitors and

tourists to the island. There are more visitors and more incidents, or at least more reporting of incidents; therefore, a conclusion could be drawn that fewer visitors would result in fewer incidents. Unfortunately, a solution is not that simple.

A significant reduction in visitor numbers is unlikely to eventuate, given that the trend of the ten years prior to the fatality had been for numbers to increase. Although there was some decline in the following five years (Appendix One, EPA 2005b), it is reasonable to assume that numbers will continue to increase unless some external intervention is taken to prevent such an outcome. Limiting numbers is not as straight-forward as it sounds. It involves removing a taken for granted freedom (*i.e.*, access to the island), one that is assumed as a human right.<sup>22</sup> It would also mean a curtailing of economic growth.

Also, if human behaviour is identified as a key problem in the management of dingoes, then the total number of visitors would seem of little consequence. The number of occurrences of aberrant behaviour is the issue that needs to be addressed. Education has been tried and since the fatality this campaign has been stepped up (Beckmann and Savage 2003, Beckmann 2004), but there is so much that tourists and other stakeholders could be educated about at any given destination that it can become overwhelming and they may simply choose to ignore it. It is critical to continue to properly evaluate whether the QPWS education campaign has impacted on the behaviour of visitors to the island. Unless these campaigns are succeeding, current management efforts may do little in mitigating the risk of further catastrophes.

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<sup>22</sup> I have not discussed ethics and values of human versus animal rights in this chapter, although it may be pertinent to the debate and is worthy of further research. For further information on this topic see, for example, Machan (2004) and Regan (2003, 2004).



Wildlife tourism management should aim for order and harmony between members of the wildlife tourism community. The initial cull of 31 dingoes on Fraser Island caused disharmony:

*We got a staggering amount of responses from the public in terms of letters, in terms of complaints. We got a lot of complaints and a lot of queries from conservation groups. The Minister and the Premier, I believe, stated that they've never had an issue that they'd had so much hate or so much concern about, and they had received death threats from people involved .... So there were many people staggered by the response to the killing, highlighted by the fact that we had rangers on TV with guns at the heads of dingoes ('Len', Wildlife Manager, September 2001).*

The management of dingoes, as a form of wildlife tourism on Fraser Island, embodies a complex system, and needs to be managed as such. Current dingo management is based on the premise that all interaction is negative, and therefore all interaction should be avoided, when this is clearly not the case. The strategies for eradicating negative interactions also limit positive interactions, which are part of the essential nature of wildlife tourism. Currently, the management focuses on creating fear in dingoes. That human-dingo interactions involve two parties requires greater recognition, and management of both is required for the safe and sustainable continuance of wildlife tourism on Fraser Island.

A model for co-existence between various members of the wildlife tourism community, and in particular between humans and dingoes, is needed to reduce the conflict that is an impediment to both good management and sustainable wildlife tourism. This will be discussed further in the following chapters. Before then, however, examining the constructions that inform current management practices on Fraser Island, by interrogating the FIDMS, will enable us to understand and then challenge these constructions.

## SECTION THREE: CONSIDERING CASE STUDIES AND ANALYSING DATA

### CHAPTER EIGHT

# **Deconstructing Dingo Management on Fraser Island<sup>1</sup>**

## **8.0 Introduction**

This chapter uses a social constructionist approach to examine the management of dingoes as a form of wildlife tourism on Fraser Island. As discussed in the previous chapter, this issue came to public prominence in April 2001 when a child was killed by two dingoes while holidaying with family on the island. The initial management response was to kill 31 dingoes. This action proved controversial and attracted widespread criticism from environmental groups, animal welfare groups and members of the public (Ryan and Hammond 2001:1,5). However, this ‘culling’ remains one of seven key strategies employed in the ongoing management of the island’s dingoes as outlined in the *Fraser Island Dingo Management Strategy*

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<sup>1</sup> Parts of this chapter have been published in Hytten and Burns (2007a).

(FIDMS), published by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in November 2001, and the review of this strategy published in 2006.

Social constructionism, as discussed in Chapter Three, is based on the premise that versions of reality are constructed and perpetuated through discourses and other forms of interaction, and requires that these be examined to identify how they shape social responses to issues (Burr 2003:3). In relation to environmental issues, such as wildlife tourism, careful attention must be paid to the ambiguities and inconsistencies within discourses to determine how particular definitions of nature serve the interests of certain groups, and disempower other groups, other species or other aspects of the natural environment (Dwyer 1996:161, Mullin 1999:212). It is particularly important that decision makers, policy makers and managers make special efforts to attend to constructions coming from other locations, to ensure the appropriateness and effectiveness of decisions made and measures undertaken (Hayles 1995:2).

From the FIDMS, other EPA documents relevant to Fraser Island, and the educational material they endorse, emerges a very distinct construction of dingoes on Fraser Island, and what constitutes appropriate dingo management. This chapter examines the FIDMS, other management documents, and educational material observed during fieldwork on the island, to identify and critically deconstruct some of the key assumptions underpinning the current management of dingoes on Fraser Island. The resultant fuller understanding of these assumptions enables them to be further analysed and challenged in the following chapters.

## **8.1 Assumptions Underpinning the Fraser Island Dingo Management Strategy (FIDMS)<sup>2</sup>**

The FIDMS is based on the premise that the dingoes of Fraser Island have significant conservation value because in time they may become the purest strain of dingo in Australia, and their conservation is therefore of national importance (EPA 2001b:3, EPA 2006:3). At the same time, it recognises that dingoes are an important tourism attraction and marketing draw-card for local, national and international visitors to Fraser Island, and one of the objectives of the FIDMS is “to provide Fraser Island visitors with a safe, enjoyable opportunity to view dingoes in an environment as near as possible to their natural state” (EPA 2001b:2).

However, the FIDMS asserts that the issue of problem dingoes has been exacerbated by the increase in the number of visitors to the island and contends that over the long term there has been a general trend of increasing negative interaction. It argues that “as a consequence of many generations of dingoes having regular and continuing contact with people, the animals have changed their natural habits, losing their fear and wariness and relying to varying degrees on people for food” (EPA 2001b:4).

This explanation is based on the assumptions that:

- dingoes should not frequent human areas;
- aggression towards humans is ‘unnatural’; and
- dingoes should be afraid of humans.

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<sup>2</sup> The FIDMS is based primarily on QPWS files and reports, a report from consultant Dr. Laurie Corbett (1998), information from QPWS staff, and recommendations from the EPA risk assessment report (2001c) (EPA 2006:7). Consequently it was written and produced by QPWS as an internal document and can be assumed to reflect the views of this organisation.

A social constructionist approach requires that these sorts of assumptions be analysed and challenged; so each one will be examined, prior to discussion of the specific management strategies that comprise the FIDMS.

### **8.1.1 Natural Places and Cultural Spaces**

The dingo management discourse has a distinctive spatial dimension. There is a widespread expectation that wild dingoes should ‘stay in the bush’. Whilst Fraser Island is constructed as a natural landscape, specified areas are expropriated from nature for human occupation and use. In some cases this occurs formally, through free-hold land tenure. Elsewhere, this process occurs discursively. As such, camping grounds and picnic areas, whether permanent or temporary, become cultural spaces. From these locations visitors can venture forth into the natural realm, but ‘nature’ that may enter the cultural spaces, is somehow less ‘natural’.

The problem is that dingoes are not staying in their designated space. During the May 2001 cull, it was the dingoes that entered camping grounds that were shot (EPA 2001b:3), regardless of their temperament or behaviour towards people, even though the fatal attack did not occur in a camping ground (*The Courier Mail* 2001a:1). However, there is no reason for a dingo to differentiate between a camping ground and ‘the bush’. Dingoes are both territorial and scavengers (Corbett 2001a:50,122). Therefore, there is nothing ‘unnatural’ about dingoes that scavenge for food in campgrounds that fall within their territory. A boundary defining a campground needs to be physical to be recognised by dingoes, and such boundaries have since been created in the form of fences on Fraser Island (as discussed in 7.4).

### 8.1.2 Unnaturally Aggressive or Aggressive Naturally?

The second problem is that dingoes are not observing designated behaviours. The FIDMS states that “dingoes are inherently aggressive and dangerous... and like other members of the dog family (grey wolves, coyotes), are capable of killing people” (EPA 2001b:8). However, in direct contradiction to these assertions, an assumption underpinning current management is that “dingoes have *become* threatening”, as opposed to being naturally threatening (*e.g.*, EPA 2001b:2-3). Dingoes displaying aggression towards people are constructed as unnatural, and the threat posed by them is not seen to derive from their ‘wildness’ but rather their deviance from it.

Four reasons for dingo aggression towards people are identified by the FIDMS:

- seeking food;
- regarding people as intruders or competitors and defending territory, females in season and pups;
- regarding humans (mainly children) as prey;
- and ‘playing’ with humans (EPA 2001b:5, EPA 2006:12-13).

However, most of the FIDMS is framed in response to addressing the first reason only, on the basis of a simplistic model of food-induced habituation. This suggests that dingoes are attracted to humans by the availability of food, ‘losing their fear of humans’ through beneficial, regular and continuing contact. When interaction occurs, dingoes then display aggression that can result in human injury or in the worst case, death (EPA 2001b:5). However, habituation, that is, reduced reaction to stimulus (Campbell *et al.* 1999:1061), in this case human presence, would seem to be an inevitable outcome of ongoing contact, and not necessarily related to food or

feeding. Nor would it necessarily lead to aggressive behaviour towards humans.<sup>3</sup> Rather, using this model to explain aggression would seem to obscure the fact that dingoes, like other dogs can be aggressive while also assuming that dingoes should (naturally) fear humans.

### 8.1.3 Who Should Fear Whom?

The FIDMS asserts that “in the high visitor-use areas dingoes can *lose* their shyness and fear of humans...” (EPA 2001b:3 (emphasis added)). Why dingoes would or should be afraid of humans in the first place is not substantiated. The dingo is a predator, not a prey animal. Species on the same level on the food chain are not generally afraid of each other (Campbell *et al.* 1999:1132) and, at least until recently, humans have not hunted dingoes on Fraser Island. On the contrary, there would seem to be a long history of *positive* interaction between humans and dingoes. As previously discussed, it is likely that dingoes were brought to Fraser Island by indigenous Australians and lived with them on the island for thousands of years (Corbett 2001a:5,18-21). Since European occupation, Fraser Island dingoes have never had cause to fear humans. It would perhaps be plausible that when human numbers were low, dingoes were wary of them because they were relatively unfamiliar. The fact that there are now so many people on Fraser Island makes it unrealistic to expect dingoes to be afraid of humans.

It would seem more appropriate that humans should fear dingoes, at least where the safety of children is concerned, given that dingoes commonly prey upon animals

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<sup>3</sup> In contrast, Herrero *et al.* (2005) found that habituation of brown bears contributed positively toward their tolerance of people at close range, potentially allowing a safer interaction between people and bears. For further sources on bears and habituation in wildlife tourism contexts see Smith *et al.* (2005).

such as kangaroos, that weigh between 17 and 66 kg (Corbett 2001a:113). Children do not have the cognitive skills to avoid or ameliorate a confrontational situation, leaving them particularly vulnerable to attack. In spite of this, many of the management strategies outlined in the FIDMS are aimed at modifying *dingoes'* behaviour, couched in the rhetoric of reinstituting their 'natural fear' of humans.

## 8.2 Management Strategies

The FIDMS contains seven specific strategies to manage dingoes on Fraser Island (Table 8.1).

Table 8.1. The Seven Strategies within the *Fraser Island Dingo Management Strategy* (EPA 2001b:7-14, EPA 2006:4).

Strategy	
1	Comprehensive scientific research and monitoring will be undertaken to ensure the principles and practices of dingo management are sound.
2	Awareness programs will continue to encourage appropriate behavior towards dingoes by Island visitors, residents and staff.
3	The dingo-human interaction will be managed by increasing Island-wide facilities and services that discourage dingoes from interacting with people and obtaining human food, and by prohibiting dingo feeding.
4	Programs will be implemented to modify dingo behaviour and habits which threaten human safety and wellbeing.
5	Any dingo identified as dangerous will be destroyed humanely using accepted methods after receiving appropriate approvals.
6	A cull to a sustainable level may be undertaken if research can show the population is not in balance with the seasonal availability of natural foods.
7	An ongoing program of monitoring and review will be conducted to assess risk levels at key visitor nodes across the Island and determine the effectiveness of dingo management strategies in maintaining these levels at an acceptable (low) level.



The first strategy outlines seven areas of ecological and historical research to be investigated to ensure the principles and practices of dingo management are sound. These tend to emphasise the value placed on the dingoes' genetic purity and entrench the theory that aggression is caused by food-induced habituation and over-population (EPA 2001b:7). This is consistent with the construction of the explanation that dingo aggression arises from feeding. However, there is a lack of research into dingo behaviour,<sup>4</sup> particularly on Fraser Island. Given that dingo behaviour is constructed as the problem, more research in this area is essential. The heavy emphasis on food-induced habituation needs to be matched by research to substantiate the claim that it in fact leads to aggression. Having acknowledged that other factors may lead to aggression, these should be the subject for research to provide a more balanced picture and sound basis for management.

Strategy 2 focuses on public education. Educational brochures and signs promoting key messages relating to dingoes on Fraser Island have been produced since 1989, with significant additional materials introduced in 1998, 2000 and 2001 (Beckmann 2004, Beckmann and Savage 2003:8). The overriding focus of the education campaign is on not feeding dingoes. In the main brochure distributed to visitors to the Island, entitled *Be Dingo Aware!*, 22 references are made to feeding and food storage and only three refer to staying with children. Educational material does not explicitly state the extent of the danger posed to children by dingoes. The *Be Dingo Aware!* brochure does say: "[dingoes] have bitten visitors, occasionally quite severely and are capable of killing people", but does not make it clear that dingoes

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<sup>4</sup> For studies on dingo behaviour see Appleby (2003), Catling *et al.* (1992), Corbett (1998, 2001a, 2004), Glen and Dickman (2005), Kershaw *et al.* (2005), Lawrence and Higginbottom (2001), Moussalli (1994), O'Brien (1995) and Price (1994).

*have* killed somebody, surely vital information, given that not everybody (particularly international visitors) may be aware of this fact.

Under the third strategy, priority is given to facilities and structures including barrier fencing at key picnic and camping areas, food storage lockers for hikers and picnickers, and secure bins at some camping grounds and picnic areas and along the beach (EPA 2001b:12). Erecting barrier fencing is an action consistent with the construction of spaces discussed earlier. Likewise, food lockers and bins play a vital role in facilitating compliance to the guidelines disseminated through the education program aimed to reduce interaction and habituation.

Strategy 4 aims to “reduce the number of habituated animals, reverse the habituation process ... and ... reinstitute the dingoes’ natural wariness towards people and/or educate dingoes to avoid camping, picnic and other high use areas” (EPA 2001b:13) through hazing. As previously discussed, hazing is defined as “harassing dingoes by way of irritation.” (EPA 2001b:13-14, EPA 2006:35). Implicit in this strategy is the assertion that the hazing methods employed by QPWS staff are restoring the ‘natural’ relationship between dingoes and humans by reversing the unnatural process of habituation. However ‘irritation’ surely would not cause *fear*. To achieve this desired outcome, the methods of hazing must be considerably worse than they sound in the FIDMS. This gives rise to ethical considerations about the detrimental effects that hazing may have on dingoes.

Misleadingly entitled “Managing dingo populations”, the fifth strategy begins by outlining why Corbett (1998) deemed feeding stations to be an inappropriate management strategy. It makes the assertion that “alternative options for management *hinge* on destruction of problem animals and a limited and selective

cull” (EPA 2001b:14 (emphasis added)). This not only implies that ‘managing the dingo population’ is necessary, but that there are only two possible options. It also suggests that destroying ‘problem animals’ is somehow part of ‘population management’. This is untrue; rather, “dingoes have also been destroyed as a management option to reduce the level or risk to humans” (EPA 2001b:14). This is clearly not population management but the management of dingoes to conform to socially constructed parameters of acceptability.

In this section, dingoes are increasingly referred to as “animals” rather than dingoes, distancing the reality of ‘direct control’ or ‘direct management’ from the pure and protected dingo described earlier in the FIDMS (EPA 2001b:2,15). However, destroying dingoes is constructed as essentially benign: “the RSPCA will be invited to contribute to the further development of procedures and protocols for the *safe* and *humane euthanasia* of dingoes” (EPA 2001b:14 (emphasis added)). This is a misuse of the word ‘euthanasia’ which is generally defined as “the act or practice of killing incurably sick or injured animals for reasons of mercy” (Soanes *et al.* 2004:493). By using this word, killing dingoes is constructed as being not only necessary but merciful, even kind. Habituation becomes an illness the dingoes suffer until they are humanely put out of their misery. The action of killing aggressive dingoes is constructed as natural and necessary.

Despite being more controversial within the wider community, as evident in the public response to the cull in May 2001, ‘culling’ dingoes under strategy 6, is constructed as even more benign than killing ‘problem animals’. This strategy states that culling would only be considered if research substantiated existing anecdotal evidence indicating that the majority of serious dingo attacks occur when self-

regulation of the dingo population is most prevalent. “In this event the management option to ‘*speed up this natural process* and cull appropriate animals so that the frequency and severity of attacks on humans would be reduced’ (Corbett 1998:14) may be implemented” (EPA 2001b:15, EPA 2006:38-39 (emphasis added)). As such these interventionist strategies are constructed to be within the scope of natural processes.

Another “important objective” of culling is “balancing dingo numbers with the seasonal availability of natural foods ... and improving the overall genetic purity of the Island’s dingo population” (EPA 2001b:15, EPA 2006:39). This seems to contradict the findings of research that suggest that dingo populations are in fact highly responsive to changing food supplies and conditions, as acknowledged within the FIDMS (Corbett 2001a:134, EPA 2001b:4). Culling is the ultimate demonstration of conservation as control (Adams 2003b:235, Milton 2000:240). Far from restoring the ‘balance of nature’ it would seem that this practice seeks to restore the balance between human land use and dingoes: a balance clearly in the favour of humans.

Strategy 7 endorses a program of ongoing monitoring and review aiming to ensure that the management strategies implemented result in a reduction in risk. This periodic review process is designed to allow for the evaluation of the effectiveness of various actions, thereby enabling the prioritisation or modification of actions to be made as required ensuring “that dingo management on the Island remains a dynamic, evolving process” (EPA 2001b:16, EPA 2006:41). However, it would appear that under the FIDMS, future management options are constrained by the current construction of the dingo and of ‘the problem’.

## 8.3 Implications

The implications of this analysis can be conceptualised in terms of three levels of action. Firstly, *recognising* the process of construction and the nature of the constructions underpinning management. Secondly *matching* management practice with discourse. And ultimately, *challenging* constructions, *creating* new possibilities for action and inaction.

### 8.3.1 Recognising and Acknowledging Constructions

The first implication is that the social construction of both ‘the problem’ and its explanation needs to be recognised. Dingo management on Fraser Island is based on a series of assumptions about nature and what is natural. Such assumptions are far from an objective representation of reality. Rather, they are the product of the process of social construction, and the FIDMS draws upon a range of discourses in defining the problem, offering an explanation, and developing and implementing solutions.

The problem constructed by the FIDMS and underpinning current dingo management on Fraser Island is that “dingoes have *developed* aggressive behaviours”, “*become* threatening”, and as such “pose a risk to human safety” (EPA 2001c:3, EPA 2001b:2-3). This is only one way of conceptualising the problem. As identified earlier, this construction of the problem contradicts assertions within the FIDMS that dingoes are inherently aggressive and dangerous (EPA 2001b:8). A fuller and more fundamental recognition of this would give rise to a very different construction of the problem and subsequently foster very different actions. Presently, the dingoes are the active party and humans the passive subjects, thus the

dingoes are presented as causing the problem. It is therefore largely their actions, rather than the actions of humans that the FIDMS attempts to explain and subsequently modify.

As well as recognising that the problem is socially constructed, it is important to recognise that the explanation offered by the FIDMS is only one possible explanation. In this discourse, the problem results from dingoes “losing their natural fear of humans” largely as a result of deliberate and inadvertent feeding (EPA 2001c: 4). As identified, this explanation is based on the expectations that dingoes should fear humans, stay out of particular spaces and not display aggression towards people. These expectations need to be acknowledged and substantiated. If they cannot be substantiated they need to be reconsidered.

There is also a need to be explicit about the priorities of dingo management. In the FIDMS, the terms ‘natural’ and ‘unnatural’ are deployed both in defining and explaining the problem, and to qualify or legitimate actions. However, these are contested terms (Barry 1999:11-12, Goedeke and Herda-Rapp 2005:3-9, Sylvan 1998:229). Likewise, their usage in the context of the FIDMS can be contested. Rather than seeking to return dingoes to some ‘wild’ and ‘natural’ state, it would seem that management strategies (in particular hazing) seek to modify dingo behaviours to make them match human expectations. Here “the wildness of nature is subjugated to a specified regime of human management, bringing the outcomes of natural processes within a range acceptable to society” (Adams 2003b:126). Thus, rather than being inherently conservationist, the priority for dingo management appears to be human safety, in conjunction with economic concerns about the success of the tourism industry (Peace 2002:15), and fear of litigation (see Jones

2001:4). It is important that the goals of wildlife management are clearly articulated (Decker *et al.* 2001:82). Therefore these priorities should be made clear in the management literature as factors driving management.

The implementation of strategies also needs to be made more transparent.<sup>5</sup> There is a clear lack of communication about the killing of dingoes to the visiting public and the Queensland public more generally. It is very important that visitors to Fraser Island are aware of the potentially fatal outcomes for the dingoes with which they may interact. The wider public also has a right to know about killing that takes place on the island. The widespread public response to the cull in May 2001 revealed that many people hold strong views about whether such killing should take place in a national park. Under strategy 6 of the FIDMS “accurate records [are] maintained of the number of dingoes that are destroyed each year” (EPA 2001b:13). Given that Fraser Island is a public domain, this information should be made available for public scrutiny.

### **8.3.2 Making Management Consistent with Constructions**

It is evident that the management discourse constructs dingoes in a particular way. The second implication is that dingo management on Fraser Island should be consistent with these constructions, reflecting priorities, addressing the problem identified and facilitating the fulfilment of expectations.

An important part of justifying actions chosen is explaining why other actions were not chosen. Many different management strategies were suggested following the 2001 fatal attack. The risk assessment outlined why some of these options were

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<sup>5</sup> The need for decision-making that is both informed and transparent has been argued in other contexts. See, for example, Hunter (1997).

rejected (EPA 2001c:18-20). It would seem that the options chosen were not subject to the same level of scrutiny as those that were not chosen. Dingo pup training was not supported because “the ‘taming’ of wild animals is not compatible with the values of a National Park or a World Heritage Area where wild animals are a feature of the natural resource” (EPA 2001c:19). If taming of wild animals is not compatible with the values of a National Park or World Heritage Area, surely killing them is not either. Thus culling is inconsistent firstly with the construction of dingoes as protected wild animals, and secondly with the construction of Fraser Island as a national park or World Heritage Area, where nature is supposed to be ‘put first’ and “conservation is the primary purpose” (EPA 2001d:7).

Having recognised that the problem is dingoes posing a risk to humans, and that the priority is promoting human safety, these constructions should form the basis of the management strategy. The public education program should focus on communicating this risk and how people can deal with it. It is widely accepted that children are most at risk of serious injury or death (EPA 1999b:2, EPA 2001b:5) and that adults on their own may also be at risk. Thus ‘stay with your children at all times’ and ‘always walk in groups’ should be *the* central messages communicated to visitors. However, as seen earlier, the education material is largely framed in terms of reducing feeding and the availability of food. These messages play an important role in communicating the explanation constructed by the management discourse, but need to be matched with serious messages about the reality and extent of the risk posed by dingoes, particularly to children.

Facilities, fines and fences are consistent with the construction of the explanation, and play an important role in facilitating the fulfilment of expectations. Facilities,



such as food lockers allow visitors to follow the guidelines regarding the storage of food. The provision of secure bins further promotes the reduction in availability of human foods. Fines serve to reinforce the messages disseminated through the education program, and provide a deterrent against feeding and inappropriate food and rubbish storage. However, logistically QPWS does not have the capacity to enforce fines for every breach, and enforcement punishes the breach after the fact rather than preventing it (Beckman and Savage 2003:7). Fencing areas of high human activity, such as resorts, camping grounds, picnic areas and townships *can* prevent inadvertent feeding and interaction between humans and dingoes. Significantly, fencing serves to make the boundaries of these human designated areas physical, making the expectation that dingoes will not frequent these spaces realistic. Peace (2002:19) argues that:

[fencing] is of little significance because the process of enclosure on Fraser Island has already taken on comprehensive proportions...[and] the dingoes are now fully circumscribed by an official mindset which demands they retreat to specified wilderness areas....

However, it is for this very reason that fencing is so important as part of the social construction of the dingoes. Underpinning the FIDMS is the social expectation that dingoes should not come into 'human' spaces. If fencing prevents the interaction with humans for which the dingoes are blamed, it can ultimately prevent dingoes from being killed for interacting with people in these spaces. Despite government department claims that fences are effective (EPA 2006) however, dingoes have been photographed crossing grids to access fenced areas (Robson 2008) on the island.

### 8.3.3 Challenging Constructions

Finally, there is scope for the constructions implicit in dingo management on Fraser Island to be challenged. Expectations and priorities can then be reconsidered, and rights and responsibilities reassigned.

Negative human-wildlife interaction that results in human injury, or even death, caused by wildlife needs to be put into perspective. The media response to the 2001 fatal dingo attack tended to be emotional and sensationalist. The political response, including the cull, could be described in the same way (*e.g.*, *The Courier Mail* 2001b:3). However, wildlife management should not be based on emotion (Moulton and Sanderson 1999:xv).<sup>6</sup> The attack needs to be viewed in the context of other causes of death. For example, on average 64 Australian children drown each year, 68 are killed in car accidents, and 11 are murdered (ABS 1996).<sup>7</sup> Each of these deaths is equally tragic, but none bring about the sort of panicked political response that resulted in the dingo cull.

Various factors may have contributed to the construction of the fatal dingo attack as *particularly* tragic, and to the extent of the media coverage it commanded. Ultimately, it seems that it was because dingoes, as *wild animals*, were responsible. The dingoes transgressed an inviolable boundary between nature and culture. Deaths caused by cultural activities or artefacts would need to be particularly drastic or

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<sup>6</sup> While numerous authors caution against the use of emotion in management decisions concerning nature (*e.g.*, Clark and Rutherford 2005, Decker *et al.* 1991, Patterson *et al.* 2003), Milton (2002) argues that emotion is hard to divorce from dealings with nature and its recognition in management may in fact have some value for both people and nature in their interactions. This notion is increasingly supported by others, especially when studying cross-cultural values of wildlife (*e.g.*, Dayer *et al.* 2007), and discussed further in Chapter Ten.

<sup>7</sup> The Australian Bureau of Statistics discontinued its review of causes of infant and child deaths following this 1996 publication (ABS 1996), which covered the years 1982-1996. Consequently, more recent statistics are not available.

numerous to evoke the sustained sense of shock and controversy that this event aroused. There seems to be a certain outrage in an animal challenging the dominance we exert upon any landscape we occupy or enter. By constructing the dingo attack as ‘wrong’ rather than ‘sad’, the government perpetuated the anthropocentric notion that humans should *not* be threatened by any other species, and that therefore ‘something had to be done’. *Challenging* this construction would allow for a considered and rational response. This could conceivably involve doing nothing towards the dingoes at all, if it is established that the problem lies with humans.

Management of dingoes in Australia and management of potentially dangerous wildlife in other countries makes for interesting comparison. For example, 14 months after the fatality on Fraser Island an infant was killed by a black bear in Fallsburg, New York. Media coverage of this event focussed on the rarity of human fatalities by black bears and, unlike on Fraser Island, the fatality did not promote any change in wildlife management policy (Gore *et al.* 2005).

The cull on Fraser Island was consistent with dominant western discourses that overwhelmingly marginalise wildlife. However, there are other discourses that must be considered, as shown by the public outcry in response to the killing of dingoes. This served to demonstrate that some people believe that wildlife should have rights not only as species, but also as individuals (*e.g.*, Animal Liberation Queensland 2003, Dunayer 2004). This is in keeping with a non-anthropocentric environmental ethic, such as Taylor’s (1986) biocentrism in which all individual organisms have equal intrinsic value (Callicott 2006:127). Discussing the rights of animals in the context of tourism ethics, Fennell (2006:184) notes that “today it is acceptable to

view animals as having rights, despite the fact that they can not claim those rights (Regan 1983).”

National parks are constructed as spaces set aside especially for ‘nature’ (EPA 2001d: 7). To make this rhetoric a reality, humans need to alter expectations and assume new responsibilities. In terms of Fraser Island, this would mean accepting that there are inherent risks in entering a landscape occupied by dangerous animals and taking responsibility for personal safety and the safety of children. People’s right to enjoy wildlife and ‘wilderness’ landscapes should be balanced with the responsibility to take appropriate precautions.

This recognition of human responsibility in such landscapes and with potentially dangerous wildlife has already occurred in some Canadian National Parks. Parks Canada, for example, produce a brochure for park visitors with opens with the statement:

You are in Black Bear Country. ... As a national park visitor, you share this natural area with bears and other wildlife that depend on it for their survival. ... By increasing your knowledge of bear behaviour, you can reduce the likelihood of an unpleasant encounter, and at the same time, help protect the black bear population. With your cooperation, bears and people can co-exist (Parks Canada 2008).

In relation to other conceivably dangerous situations within Australian national parks, solicitor Gordon Brysland suggested that the [New South Wales] government should pass legislation protecting it from liability. In this context, indemnity clauses have been used successfully in the United States to protect land managers from litigation (cited in Smith 1997:6). While such an action might seem extreme in the context of Fraser Island, it would be one way to reassign responsibility from dingoes to humans within this space. This sort of change constitutes a paradigm shift that is

clearly beyond the scope of QPWS; however, the FIDMS could be amended to place more responsibility on humans and confer more rights on dingoes. In a practical sense this could be achieved by taking into account the behaviour of the humans involved in negative human-dingo interactions when deciding ‘what to do’ about the dingo or dingoes involved.

## **8.4 Conclusion**

As wildlife around the world faces increasing pressures, it is particularly important that the appropriateness of wildlife management is assessed. Given the centrality of social perceptions to wildlife tourism management, social constructionism provides a particularly valuable approach in undertaking this challenge, as demonstrated in this chapter.

Human-dingo interaction on Fraser Island is an issue that needs to be managed carefully. The FIDMS is a socio-political document, informed by a particular approach to animal, and environmental, ethics. This chapter has argued that current management is directed by the constructions underpinning it. These need to be justified through research, or altered to encompass a wider range of interpretations of human-dingo interaction. By emphasising that food-induced habituation leads to negative human-dingo interaction, the FIDMS neglects other possible reasons for dingo aggression. The education program needs to be more balanced in consistently promoting messages about personal safety alongside those about not feeding dingoes and storing food securely. Fines for inappropriate behaviour towards dingoes, fencing and facilities are consistent with the construction of the problem and facilitate the desired outcomes of the FIDMS. However, the use of hazing, killing

‘problem dingoes’, and culling, are poorly justified, and inconsistent with the conservation aims of the FIDMS and the purpose of national parks.

More generally, the social construction of environmental problems, like negative human-wildlife interactions, needs to be recognised, and expectations and assumptions underpinning management, acknowledged and substantiated. Wildlife tourism management should at least be consistent with these constructions, reflecting priorities, addressing the problems identified and facilitating the fulfilment of expectations. Finally, constructions should be challenged, to create new possibilities for action, and to ensure that management is appropriate, effective, and aimed toward supporting the sustainability of wildlife tourism. Following a detailed comparison of people, wildlife, tourism and management on Penguin Island and Fraser Island in the following chapter (Chapter Nine), Chapter Ten continues to challenge ideologies and practices of wildlife tourism management on both islands and proposes alternatives to the current dominant constructions of interactions.



## SECTION THREE: CONSIDERING CASE STUDIES AND ANALYSING DATA

### CHAPTER NINE

# **Managing Wildlife Tourism Issues on Fraser Island and Penguin Island<sup>1</sup>**

## **9.0 Introduction**

Interactions between people and non-human animals in non-captive Australian wildlife tourism settings are often managed by government organisations, as is the case on Penguin and Fraser Islands. Organisations such as the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC)<sup>2</sup> in Western Australia and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) in Queensland increasingly find that their policies and practices for natural settings, such as national parks and other protected areas, need to be inclusive of management for both people and animals, and for the interactions

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<sup>1</sup> Parts of this chapter have been previously published in Burns (2006).

<sup>2</sup> The Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) in Western Australia changed its name to the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) in July 2006. I have retained the use of CALM as the acronym throughout most of this thesis because that was what the Department was called during my research and during which time all of the events described occurred. DEC is only used when referring to events post July 2006.



between them. The Fraser Island and Penguin Island case studies examined in this thesis offer significant insight into a range of issues pertaining to the management of human-animal interactions in wildlife tourism settings. On Fraser Island this significance is due to the need to limit dangerous encounters with wildlife for people, and on Penguin Island the driving force of conservation.

This chapter discusses and compares the two islands, focusing on the values placed on wildlife and the nature of human-wildlife interaction. As Fennell *et al.* (2008) note, in a discussion on management ethics, “rapid change, inherent complexity, substantial uncertainty, and frequent conflict are pervasive realities of the environmental management domain (Gunderson 2003, Mitchell 2004, 2005).” Frameworks for sustainably managing natural assets used by tourists (for example, Hughey *et al.* 2004) often ignore these realities, particularly people’s changing perceptions of wildlife. These perceptions were examined in a global context in Chapter Five, where their influence on the sustainability of wildlife tourism was demonstrated. Consequently, this chapter also explores the changing relationship between people and dingoes, and people and penguins, illustrating that as perceptions of wildlife change, management of interactions must also change.

## **9.1 The Case Studies**

As outlined in Chapter Two, both Fraser and Penguin Islands lie off the Australian coast and are home to tourist attracting wildlife. They both have a long history of human visitation, with human-wildlife interactions gaining increasing importance, partly because of the prioritising of economic growth in our political economy and

the growing dominance of tourism, both in number of tourists and its economic impacts.

Although both islands are home to many wildlife species, the two foregrounded in this thesis have been dingoes and penguins. These two species share some commonalities in their interactions with people that influence the way they are managed, but also have some very obvious differences, as previously discussed.

Both Penguin Island and Fraser Island are managed by state government instrumentalities. They are also both popular tourist destinations and of recreational and, in the case of Fraser Island, residential, interest to locals. All these members of the wildlife tourism community interact with the island's wildlife in ways that increasingly need managing.

## **9.2 Valuing Wildlife**

As discussed in Chapter Five, people's perceptions of wildlife are likely to be influenced by the values they place on particular species.<sup>3</sup> So too their perceptions, and values, are likely to influence the type of interactions they seek. In a nationwide sample of American preferences for diverse animals, Kellert (1996:101) found that "The most preferred groups were domesticated, aesthetically appealing, and game animals.<sup>4</sup> The least preferred were the biting and stinging invertebrates, aesthetically

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<sup>3</sup> For further information on the values associated with wildlife see Brown, Siemer and Decker (2001), Burns (2004b), Dayer *et al.* (2007), Decker and Goff (1987), Kellert (1996), Manfredo *et al.* (2003), Patterson *et al.* (2003), Schaenzel (1998), and Teel *et al.* (2007).

<sup>4</sup> In cases of wildlife tourism, it is apparent that some species are more readily sought after than others and this distinction is often based on characteristics such as size, perceived beauty, charisma, accessibility, and likeness to humans (Curtin 2005:11, Potter 2002).

unattractive species, and animals associated with human injury, disease and property damage” (p102).<sup>5</sup>

Penguins clearly fall into Kellert’s category of ‘most preferred’ because of their aesthetic appeal. They are popularly portrayed as a wild animal that is safe, benign, cute, and clumsy (and consequently vulnerable). They feature in anthropomorphic documentaries,<sup>6</sup> and in children’s literature, movies<sup>7</sup> and television programmes (generations of Australian children, for example, left chairs in front of the television and went to bed at the nightly bidding of ‘Fat Cat’ and ‘Percy the Penguin’).

Dingoes, however, are more ambiguous. Straddling both the categories described by Kellert, they are ‘preferred’ because they are similar looking to the domesticated dog. However, dingoes are associated with human injury and death and this puts them firmly in the ‘least preferred’ category. They are also maligned because, as the largest land-based predatory animal on the Australian continent, they have a history of conflict with pastoralists. This difficulty of classification makes murky the waters of dingo management and of public perceptions of dingoes.

### **9.3 Human-Wildlife Interactions**

People can experience interactions with wildlife that can be both positive and negative (Herda-Rapp and Goedeke 2005:1).<sup>8</sup> So, too, wildlife can experience interactions with people that can be both positive and negative.<sup>9</sup> Sometimes these

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<sup>5</sup> Similarly, Woods’ (2000) study revealed that the least favourite animals were those “least like humans, ... wild, unpredictable, dangerous and ... not as safe-human oriented” (p38).

<sup>6</sup> Such as *The March of the Penguins* (2005) and *The Congress of Penguins* (1995).

<sup>7</sup> Such as *Surf’s Up* (2007) and *Happy Feet* (2006).

<sup>8</sup> For further discussion on the human dimensions of wildlife interactions see Bulbeck (2005), Brown, Siemer and Decker (2001), and Newsome, Dowling and Moore (2005).

<sup>9</sup> For a discussion on some of the negative effects of wildlife tourism on wildlife see Green and Giese (2004).

experiences are comparable, such as when a person is injured and the wildlife then culled (*e.g.*, Burns and Howard 2003) or when the interactions provide pleasure for people while enhancing conservation for wildlife (Higginbottom and Tribe 2004), and sometimes they are not.

Discussions about which interactions are perceived as positive and which are perceived as negative usually start from the premise that all members of the wildlife tourism community will view interactions in the same way. This is, of course, incorrect. Just as values vary between groups, and individuals, so do perceptions of interactions. Perceptions of positive and negative can be socially constructed, as discussed in the previous chapter, and are not universally shared. Current management on Fraser Island, for example, treats all interactions as potentially negative ones and therefore aims to reduce them all. Many tourists and visitors to the island want to see dingoes in their natural habitat and would consider a sighting, where the dingo is in close proximity but no harm comes to either of them, as positive.

### **9.3.1 Fraser Island**

Fraser Island has a long history of human occupation and use, becoming a favoured recreation destination in the past two decades. During its years as a site for extensive sand mining and logging, tourism had commenced on a largely unregulated and small scale. Human-dingo interactions occurred during this time and representatives from resident and tourism industry groups recalled accounts of befriending dingoes and of dingoes stealing food, such as fishing bait or garbage (as discussed in Chapter Seven). These interactions are typically presented as benign,

and sometimes even positive, without the same associations of negativity and fear prevalent in more recent years.

Increasing tourist numbers have coincided with an increasing number of interactions between tourists and dingoes. Following several incidents in 1998, a report commissioned by the Queensland state government argued that the issue of dingo management on Fraser Island needed to be seriously addressed (Corbett 1998), and a *Draft Fraser Island Dingo Management Strategy* was developed the following year (EPA 1999b). QPWS has subsequently targeted human-dingo interactions in their management strategies. As discussed in the previous chapter, a *Risk Assessment* report released in May 2001 (EPA 2001c) and the final *Fraser Island Dingo Management Strategy* released in November 2001 (EPA 2001b) heralded substantial changes for human-animal interactions on the island.

### **9.3.2 Penguin Island**

Penguin Island has a long history as a destination for recreation. Indigenous Australians would have had ongoing contact with the island's wildlife, and organised European visitation began in 1918 when the island was reserved for public use and managed by a trust before being handed over to the Rockingham Road Board (Wienecke *et al.* 1995:443). A search light unit was stationed on the island during WWII, and in 1949 Penguin Island became the responsibility of the State Gardens Board who declared its purpose for recreation and camping, and as a possible future resort (p443-4). Part of the island was first leased to a private company for holiday huts in the early 1950s, bringing penguins and people into close and regular contact.

Penguin Island was proclaimed an A-class reserve in 1957 to be managed by the National Parks Board (Wienecke *et al.* 1995:444) and visitation continued to grow. Penguin Island Propriety Limited leased the island between 1969 and 1987 establishing 22 asbestos and cement buildings that were rented to holiday-makers. During this time there were no restrictions on public access to the island (1995:444), or to the penguins.

Management strategies aimed at developing the island for public use were very successful in attracting visitor numbers. The asbestos huts were in high demand, especially during summer and school holiday seasons and booking was required by would-be holiday-makers well in advance. Such intense use, however, destroyed much of the breeding habitat on the island as ever increasing human activity led to destabilisation of sand dunes and severe loss of vegetation (Wienecke *et al.* 1995:444). As a consequence of the lack of natural breeding sites, some penguins took up residence under the buildings (Dunlop *et al.* 1988:94), bringing them into even closer contact with visitors.

In 1982, the Western Australian National Parks Authority began to deal with the problems of erosion and unchecked visitor access, with CALM taking over in 1987. Management by CALM (now DEC) over the last two decades has focussed on conservation of the natural features of Penguin Island and substantially changed the ways in which people and wildlife interact on the island.

## **9.4 Management Issues: Changing perceptions and management adjustments**

Both Penguin Island and Fraser Island have undergone some significant changes in their rates of human visitation and consequent interactions between people and wildlife over the last twenty years. Patterson *et al.* (2003:171) note that as rural landscapes become increasingly urbanised new challenges are created for wildlife management. This has certainly been the case for Penguin and Fraser Islands where fundamental changes have been required in decision-making paradigms and the research approaches used to inform decision-making.

### **9.4.1 Fraser Island**

The impetus for management change on Penguin Island seemed to come largely from the Friends of Shoalwater Bay group who saw degradation on the island and were concerned for the penguins and their habitat and therefore lobbied the government. Likewise, Fraser Island has a strong history of community lobbying for conservation measures. People like John Sinclair (Sinclair 1994), and groups like the Fraser Island Defenders Organisation (FIDO), gained much media attention in the 1970s and 1980s and were successful in stopping logging and mining on Fraser Island. The early 1990s then saw great change as large parts of the island were declared a World Heritage Area and management responsibilities shifted from the Forestry Department to QPWS.

QPWS has many management issues to deal with on this large island that attracts high numbers of both national and international tourists annually. Roads, rubbish and sewerage are ongoing issues that many QPWS staff were keen to talk about in

interviews. In terms of human-wildlife interactions though, dingoes have been perceived as a major management issue in recent years (Figure 9.1).



Figure 9.1: A Dingo and Picnickers on a Fraser Island Beach (photographer: Karen Hytten).

Peace (2001, 2002) explores a romanticised view of the Fraser Island dingo based on representations portraying it as ‘pure’ and ‘wild,’ living in a pristine and unspoilt natural habitat (2001:190).<sup>10</sup> It was this dingo that tourists came to see and that the tourism industry promoted; however, this romanticised view began to change with reports of negative interactions between dingoes and humans on Fraser Island during the late 1990s (Peace 2001:183; 2002:19). The relabelling of dingoes as dangerous and aggressive (EPA 2001c:3, EPA 2001b:2-3, Hytten and Burns 2007a) culminated with the fatal attack in 2001. QPWS management response to this was necessarily

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<sup>10</sup> This view of Fraser Island dingoes contrasts with the dominant view of mainland dingoes, as cunning and evil predators of livestock, as previously discussed.



swift and attracted much criticism from animal welfare groups and other concerned stakeholders (see Burns and Howard 2003, Courier Mail 2001). 31 dingoes were immediately killed and their ongoing management includes ‘culling’<sup>11</sup> of identified problem dingoes (at a rate of about one per month), hazing (described in Chapters Seven and Eight), fencing, and a campaign to dissuade people from feeding dingoes: ‘Be Dingo Smart’, which includes large fines for misdemeanours (Beckmann and Savage 2003). These ongoing management strategies were discussed and analysed in the previous two chapters.

The fatality forced QPWS into taking a more active role in managing human-wildlife interactions on the island, and not just the interactions between people and dingoes.<sup>12</sup> Dingoes have been removed (by a combination of killing, hazing and fencing) from areas most frequented by tourists, such as campgrounds and resorts, in a management approach that reduces all interactions, both positive and negative. Consequently, tourists are less likely to come into contact with this form of wildlife.<sup>13</sup> This outcome is not necessarily welcomed by tourists who visit the island with the expectation of seeing dingoes, or by tour operators who have used the dingo image widely as a positive marketing tool (Figure 9.2).

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<sup>11</sup> ‘Culling’, as management speak that sanitises the action of killing (shooting) dingoes, was discussed in Chapters Seven and Eight.

<sup>12</sup> For example, a kookaburra was killed at Central Station (one of Fraser Island’s most popular tourist destinations) in September 2001 after it injured the cheek of a male tourist. The man was eating his lunch at the time and the injury occurred because the bird was attempting to take the man’s sandwich. The bird was subsequently shot by a QPWS ranger. Bus loads of tourists arrive daily at Central Station and, as their lunch is spread out on picnic tables or cooked on a barbeque, nearby trees are frequented by birds waiting for a feed. Signs in the area warn visitors also about lizards and dingoes that may scavenge for food (see Appendix Three).

<sup>13</sup> A further consequence of the fatality has been an increased demand for further research, mainly in the area of dingo biology, as QPWS recognised that more needed to be known (such as exact population numbers and feeding habits) about dingoes on the island.



Figure 9.2: A Dingo Image on the Side of a Tour Bus (photographer: G. L. Burns).

These contrasting attitudes toward the dingo parallel findings by Kellert (1996:103-111) examining American attitudes toward the wolf, *Canis lupus*. The wolf once had a bounty on its head (p103), as did the dingo,<sup>14</sup> and in America in the 1800s there was even a “national extermination campaign” (p104) against the wolf. Native Americans viewed the wolf as a creature of power and inspiration, while for the non-natives it was considered an evil presence or vicious competitor (p103) because wolves, like dingoes, prey on livestock. Parallels can also be drawn here with indigenous versus non-indigenous Australian views of the dingo. For indigenous Australians, the dingo was seen as a companion and protector (Meggitt 1965), yet for non-indigenous Australians the dingo was a dangerous sheep killer

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<sup>14</sup> For further information on dingo bounties in Australia see Marcus (1989), McKnight (1969), Allen and Sparkes (2001).

(Allen and Sparkes 2001). No doubt both Americans and Australians inherited this attitude from Europe where wolves had been persecuted for centuries (Kellert 1996:103). However, these attitudes have changed.

In America, the wolf has become an icon of wilderness preservation (Kellert 1996:106, Nie 2001). While the dingo has not so far achieved this status it would seem that there is an increasing possibility that it could do so given that there has been much discussion on the topic of dingo conservation in recent years (see, for example, Dickman and Lunney 2001a). To date, QPWS strategies struggle to deal with this attention as they focus on the protection of people over the protection of dingoes (Hyttén and Burns 2007a). This occurs despite recognition in the FIDMS that the conservation of Fraser Island dingoes is of national significance (EPA 2001b: 4, 2006), and conflicts with the stated conservation goals of this national park and World Heritage Area (EPA 2001d, 2002, 2005a).

#### **9.4.2 Penguin Island**

Penguin Island was once a holiday destination away from the city; however, this situation has dramatically changed. The industrialisation of the Kwinana/Rockingham area in the 1960s (Kwinana Industries Council 2005:1) brought urbanisation into the region, and over the past 20 years rapidly increasing human population has led to urban growth and associated improved infrastructure (Wienecke *et al.* 1995:445). In 2000 a freeway extension south of Perth opened linking Rockingham city with the state capital in what can be less than an hour's drive and allows for a growing number of daily commuters to and from the area.<sup>15</sup> The Mandurah Line of the New MetroRail project includes a railway station in

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<sup>15</sup> See Wienecke, Wooller and Klomp (1995:445) for a table of past and projected population growth.

Rockingham that opened in December 2007, making it easier for visitors to access Penguin Island without the assistance of a tour company. These changes have placed, and are likely to continue to place, increasing ecological pressure on Penguin Island directly due to increased visitation and more indirectly due to increased human use of natural resources in the surrounding areas.

CALM has managed the whole of Penguin Island since 1987 and some major changes have been made. When CALM took control the island was severely degraded due to uncontrolled public access. The 22 asbestos cement buildings were no longer suitable for human habitation. CALM's goals were to enhance nature conservation management on the island, to fulfill visitor expectations of a visit to Penguin Island, and to enhance tourists' appreciation and understanding of the natural and cultural values of the island (*'Howard', Senior CALM staff member, January 2002*). Achieving this required local community support as well as considerable financial investment (Orr and Pobar 1992).

Following the dismantling of the asbestos cement holiday homes, three buildings were constructed on the island. These include a Research and Management Centre that provides overnight accommodation for rangers, a toilet block, and the Penguin Island Discovery Centre (Figure 9.3).



Figure 9.3: The Penguin Island Discovery Centre (photographer: G. L. Burns).

The Discovery Centre was constructed to fulfil visitor expectations of seeing penguins on the island.<sup>16</sup> It includes the Penguin Experience, where captive penguins can be viewed and an informative talk heard several times per day. This facility allows visitors to view penguins while protecting the wild population, and provides an opportunity to educate tourists. It earns revenue from an entry fee that contributes to maintenance of the island. All penguins kept in the facility have been rescued and rehabilitated by wildlife carers but are unsuitable for return to the wild.<sup>17</sup>

Penguin Island now offers a very different experience for visitors while ensuring habitat survival for penguins. In the 1960s many penguins nested under the floors of

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<sup>16</sup> Penguins come on to the island to moult and breed, but also spend large amounts of time at sea and thus sighting them on the island can not be guaranteed.

<sup>17</sup> Some of the penguins have physical injuries that prevent their release, others entered the facility as orphaned chicks and lack the necessary skills to survive without human intervention.

houses. During their movement in and out of the water at dawn and dusk they were watched, and often harassed, by tourists. There was no external control over this human-wildlife interaction. Tourists complained about penguins being noisy under the floor boards, and penguin numbers were declining.<sup>18</sup> Now no one, except a ranger, is allowed to stay on the island at night. Camping is not permitted and no housing is provided. The island is only open to visitors during daylight hours and is closed completely over the winter months (June-August). Visitors are requested to keep to designated tracks and boardwalks when traversing the island. Clear signs restrict them from ecologically sensitive areas, such as nesting grounds, and this is monitored by rangers. Both penguin and human numbers on Penguin Island are on the rise.<sup>19</sup>

CALM has put restrictions on access to Penguin Island and on length of visitation; however, it has not restricted the number of visitors. In fact, as illustrated in Appendix Two, the numbers have increased from approximately 55 000 to 75 000 in the past ten years. This is undoubtedly a consequence of the larger number of people living in the vicinity, but is also a result of increased marketing. The variety of marketing initiatives undertaken by CALM in conjunction with the ferry and tour operator include displays at the Mersey Point kiosk and restaurant, where the ferry leaves from the mainland (see Map 2.2). Brochures and fliers are distributed locally

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<sup>18</sup> Klomp *et al.* (1991) demonstrated that Little Penguins avoid areas with high levels of human disturbance, and Dunlop *et al.* (1988:96) cited human disturbance as the greatest threat to the status of breeding populations on Penguin Island. Klomp and Wooller (1988:633) found that the diet of the Little Penguins on Penguin Island “appears to be similar to fish species caught locally by commercial fishermen” and thus increased fishing may also contribute to the decline.

<sup>19</sup> On Penguin Island the breeding season starts earlier and ends later (Klomp 1987) than at other Australian Little Penguin colonies (*e.g.*, Phillip Island). As “numerous ecological factors have the potential to influence breeding seasons” (Knight and Rogers 2004:339), the fact that the season is longer on Penguin Island, sometimes allowing for two clutches of eggs, suggests that the ecological factors are favourable. This is supported by recent research by Chiaradia *et al.* (2007:1535) who found that the colony had “high fledging success.”

and at tourism industry outlets, such as travel agents and hotels, throughout Western Australia and CALM maintains a web page where a virtual tour of the island is available.<sup>20</sup>

## 9.5 Comparing the Two Case Study Areas

Having described interactions and management issues separately on the two islands, I am now going to bring the two together to further compare and summarise some key similarities and differences. In both cases, tourism use by people competes with habitat use by wildlife and the existence of the wildlife is threatened. Early community lobbying for management change on both islands came from groups that were largely made up of local stakeholders and were not tourism related. Serious attempts at conservation of flora and fauna in both study areas occurred at similar times, although on different scales due to the different sizes of the islands and the different nature of exploitation. CALM began making changes on Penguin Island in the late 1980s. Logging on Fraser Island ceased in the early 1990s and the island was declared a World Heritage Area in 1992, although the environmentally focused ‘fight for Fraser’ had been taken up by community groups since the 1970s (Sinclair 1994).

There are no permanent residents on Penguin Island and, with the exception of the short-term habitation of the hermit Seaforth McKenzie (Crane *et al.* nd), it is unlikely that there ever have been. There are, however, residents on Fraser Island, and there have been for as long as Australia is known to have had human habitation. Therefore, restrictions, such as barriers (fences) and other strategies aimed at

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<sup>20</sup> The virtual tour can be taken at [http://www.calm.wa.gov.au/tourism/penguin\\_is\\_virtual\\_tour.html](http://www.calm.wa.gov.au/tourism/penguin_is_virtual_tour.html).

limiting human-wildlife contact are more likely to be a contentious issue for the Fraser Island residents who perceive that they have a right to freely access all of the island that they call home (as discussed in Chapter Seven).

Visitor numbers to Penguin Island (75 000) are much smaller than numbers to Fraser Island (300 000), but this difference should be viewed in the light of the relative size of the two islands. Penguin Island, at only 12.5 hectares, is 1000 times smaller than 160 000 hectare Fraser Island. Also, Penguin Island is only open to visitors for about 40 weeks per year (September until May), covering the summer months and including major school holidays. Thus, Penguin Island has a greater visitation density, with more people per hectare per week visiting than Fraser Island. A further important distinction, however, when comparing tourism impact pertains to mode of travel on the two islands. Penguin Island visitors move around on the island by foot, while most visitors to Fraser Island travel in four wheel drive vehicles, both private and commercial. Consequently, while sheer numbers and density might assume the impact of visitation to be much greater on Penguin Island, the mode of travel on Fraser Island is potentially more destructive.

In terms of continuity of the tourism industry, it would take a lot to stop tourism on Fraser Island. The fatality in 2001 had no obvious impact on the annual tourism numbers. In fact, it may even have been of benefit for resorts which, immediately afterwards, recorded higher numbers of occupants due to tourists who had planned to visit the island but became reluctant to camp. Lower visitor numbers on Penguin Island and the single dominant visitation motivation (of seeing penguins) makes the tourism industry more vulnerable at this location. Here penguins are a key attraction, unlike dingoes on Fraser Island. Dingoes could disappear from Fraser



Island but the tourists would not. Tourists are attracted to Fraser Island for many reasons; however, most interviewed said that they would be disappointed if they were no longer able to see dingoes as part of their Fraser Island experience. Penguins are not the only reason for tourism on Penguin Island either. It is a destination for swimming, snorkeling, diving, canoeing, and viewing other wildlife (such as pelicans and terns); however, penguins are advertised as the main feature, as evidenced in the island's name, and are what many visitors say attracts them to the area. Consequently, it is reasonable to assume that disappearance of the penguins would have a big impact on the success of Penguin Island tourism.

Relationships between managers, tourists, and other stakeholders seem mostly harmonious on Penguin Island, although this has not always been the case. There was some stakeholder opposition to the holiday homes being removed and tensions remain about accessing the island via the sandbar. Over the duration of my research, however, most stakeholders I interviewed and observed seemed content. Volunteers working on the island, for example, enjoy their work and speak highly of CALM's management. The only dissent I observed was evident in graffiti painted at the entrance to the mainland jetty which read 'locals only.' This would seem to relate explicitly to the relationship between locals and visitors, and could have been a comment directed at the beach area on the mainland rather than the island. Although visitors have lost some of the freedom they had on the island in the 1960s and 1970s, most of those interviewed were very happy with their Penguin Island tourism experience.

Relationships between the managers, tourists, and other stakeholders are not always harmonious on Fraser Island. Tourists and residents often think they should have the

freedom to do whatever they like on the island, and in some cases residents actively work against the QPWS managers. For example, some residents keep domestic pets, which is inconsistent with the island's status as a national park and a World Heritage Area. Some persist in making pets of dingoes, refusing to cooperate with QPWS requests to avoid habituating the dingoes to human contact. In interviews, a common discourse among residents included the belief that QPWS staff do not know what they are doing and do not look after the island as well as they should. Many residents said they were happier when the island was managed by the Forestry Department in the 1980s. In general, residents did not support the push for World Heritage listing of Fraser Island; instead, the impetus for this came from interested others living off the island. Thus, current discontent with management of dingoes and human-dingo interactions can be understood as a reflection of some long-standing social issues (as discussed in Chapter Seven).<sup>21</sup>

## **9.6 Conclusion**

Large changes in human-wildlife interactions have occurred on these two Australian islands. In both locations contact between humans and wildlife have been forcibly limited by management bodies. On Fraser Island this occurred largely because of the perceived threat to people, while on Penguin Island it occurred because of the perceived threat to penguins. Management response on Fraser Island was to limit all contact, through a variety of means, including killing dingoes. On Penguin Island the response was to limit unregulated and uncontrolled contact, and to create the Penguin Island Discovery Centre which offers a venue in which visitors can safely

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<sup>21</sup> Wilson (1997), examining conflict surrounding the reintroduction of wolves into Yellowstone National Park, similarly found that it could not be divorced from underlying social issues.

view captive penguins while being educated about the wild penguin population on the island. Penguins can still be viewed in the wild, and, if asked, CALM volunteers working on the island advise visitors of the best penguin viewing places. Thus, people visiting Fraser Island are now less likely to see dingoes, but visitors to Penguin Island are more likely to see penguins.

Obviously these two management approaches are location and species specific. This type of “situated engagement” was called for by Suchet (1999) in her critique of wildlife management and post-colonial discourse. Because penguins fall firmly into Kellert’s (1996) category of ‘most preferred’ wildlife, there is public pressure for management policies and practices to be sympathetic to their conservation. A management strategy that advocates, and carries out, the killing of dingoes is viable because of the dingo’s ‘least preferred’ status. This does not mean, however, that this method of control has avoided public criticism (see, for example, Smith 2001, Sun Herald 2001, and The Australian 2001). The dingo’s public image remains controversial (Breckwoldt 2001:5) as their conservation status and their purity status remains contentious (Corbett 2001b). Building an enclosure for tourists to safely view captive dingoes on Fraser Island was explored, but rejected (EPA 2001b). Dingoes, like penguins, can readily be seen in zoos and other wildlife parks in Australia, and to build such a facility on Fraser Island would be a large burden on QPWS, which is already struggling with limited financial resources to deal with the many other complex management issues on this large island. A fenced area for captive dingoes may also seem too much like a zoo and therefore not fit with tourists’ expectations for an authentic Fraser Island wildlife experience.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Bulbeck (2005:79) defines a site as ‘authentic’ if it is one where the humans go to the animals at a location where the animals gather and live their lives.

Limiting tourist numbers as a way of minimising human-wildlife interactions has been discussed but not implemented as a management tool on Fraser Island (EPA 2001b, EPA 2006). Not surprisingly, a cap on numbers is not supported by the many tourism operators on Fraser Island. Nor is it welcomed by the many island residents who rely to some extent on the tourism industry for their income. However, this strategy works well on Penguin Island where tourists are restricted to the time of day and time of year they can access the island via the ferry service.

Protecting penguins, and overseeing tourist interactions with the birds, have been major management issues for CALM since they took over control of Penguin Island in 1987. However, owing to the absence of residents, CALM interactions with other stakeholders have been limited to volunteers and the now defunct 'Friends of Shoalwater Bay' group. Dingoes on the other hand have not always been the main management issue for QPWS on Fraser Island. Other issues, such as waste removal and sewerage treatment, dominate management concern on the large and extremely popular Fraser Island. Increasing concern over human-wildlife interactions has forced QPWS into greater contact with other stakeholders, particularly residents and tourists. This relationship is not always harmonious; however, this animosity has a history, as discussed, and has not just arisen as a result of recent management changes.

Some approaches by CALM and QPWS to managing human-wildlife interactions have been very similar, yet some are very different. Each has merit in its own location; however, those undertaken on Fraser Island have aroused more public interest and been more contentious. While this is undoubtedly a consequence of the more invasive nature of the management regime, it is perhaps also linked to the fact

that the wildlife on Fraser Island is a source of interest and concern to a greater number, and a wider range, of stakeholders. With these stakeholders come a diversity of values associated with wildlife interaction and management.

Ultimately, this chapter has shown that government organisations, such as QPWS and CALM, are forced to be responsive to the needs and expectations of people as well as the needs of wildlife in their management of natural settings. It also shows how human expectations of wildlife management shift with changing public perceptions of the values and threats associated with wildlife species themselves.

Analysis will now turn to the separation of people and wildlife on the two islands as a management strategy that is reinforced through boundary maintenance and anthropocentrism. Although both QPWS and DEC use boundaries, they are not necessarily solely responsible for creating the conceptual and ideological ones (as discussed previously these have origins in colonial thinking), but they do play an active role in maintaining them.

## SECTION THREE: CONSIDERING CASE STUDIES AND ANALYSING DATA

### CHAPTER TEN

#### **From Separation to Coexistence**

##### **10.0 Introduction**

Despite some different approaches to managing human-wildlife interactions, conserving natural resources remains a main priority for the management instrumentalities on both Fraser Island and Penguin Island. The ideologies behind conservation, and consequently the way in which it is enacted, are informed by a eurocentric colonial legacy and separate humans and nonhumans into the dichotomous spheres of culture and nature (as discussed in Chapter Six). This tends to result in an ‘othering’ of wildlife, a view of them as separate and inferior to human animals. As Plumwood (2003:56) argues, “Once the Other is marked, in these ways, as part of a radically separated and inferior group, there is a strong motivation to represent them as inessential.” This enables, for example, dingoes to be killed to protect the safety of people.

The unique natural features of each island have been discussed, as has the increasing involvement in and commitment to tourism. On Penguin Island the needs of

conservation and of tourism seem to coexist reasonably successfully, providing positive reinforcement for the current DEC management strategies and practices. On Fraser Island nature offers more threats to people and attacks by wildlife have forced QPWS to re-evaluate the way they manage. However, as demonstrated in Chapter Eight, no major changes to the underlying ideologies or the way management is consequently enacted appear to have taken place. Instead, a consultancy report declared QPWS's interpretation on the island as equivalent to 'best practice' in North American Parks (Beckman and Savage 2003) and the main activities since have been to implement more of the same policies and strategies.

This penultimate chapter analyses some of the ways in which people and wildlife are intentionally separated on the two islands. It also examines the potential of wildlife tourism, as a form of ecotourism, to offer an alternative way forward for people and wildlife to coexist.

## **10.1 Boundaries and their Maintenance**

Separating people and wildlife requires boundaries and, once the boundaries are created between people and animals, they need to be maintained (Milton 2000). Boundaries can be physical or metaphysical, and on Penguin Island and Fraser Island both are employed. They are, however, employed differently and this is worthy of discussion.

Metaphysical, or conceptual, boundaries are created through discourse and interpretive texts available to island visitors and residents. The boundaries are socially constructed, and readily accessible for a discourse analysis. On Fraser Island people are advised to avoid contact with dingoes for their own safety and are

shown, at least since the fatality, images of menacing looking dingoes on literature distributed by QPWS.<sup>1</sup> Tourists, visitors and residents are also warned about fines they can incur for interacting with dingoes, particularly through feeding, which offers further financial incentive for people to keep their distance from dingoes. These messages are imparted via signs and verbal communication with QPWS staff on Fraser Island, brochures distributed to island visitors and residents, and notices on the QPWS web pages.

On Penguin Island the interpretive messages encouraging distance between people and penguins are not as plentiful or as strongly worded. The main educational material comes from listening to an informal talk in the Penguin Experience by a DEC ranger. This activity is not compulsory for visitors and a small entry fee is charged; however, as the only organised activity on the island it is well attended.<sup>2</sup> Here visitors are requested to avoid contact with wild penguins, particularly when they are moulting, for the safety of the penguins, but are also advised where penguins can be sighted on the island and how best to approach them. There are also signs on Penguin Island and brochures available for visitors where the ferry tickets are sold on the mainland and at the Discovery Centre on the island, but these give minimal information about interactions with penguins.

Physical boundaries also exist on both islands, and because of their high visibility and more obviously intrusive nature are more likely to attract attention from the wildlife tourism community. On Fraser Island visitors, tourists and residents

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<sup>1</sup> An exception to this is one poster, depicting a young dingo looking directly at the camera, containing the message: "If you feed me or leave food available I may become aggressive to people and be killed." See Appendix Three.

<sup>2</sup> This talk occurs three times per day on days the island is open to the public. During the ten talks I observed over a six-year period there were never less than 100 visitors present.



complained to me about these measures that they perceived would restrict their freedom on the island.

*I don't know what we're trying to do there, manage the dingoes or manage the humans with that fencing. Are we fencing ourselves in, or the dingoes out? I think we might be fencing ourselves in ('Reg', retired American camping with his wife on Fraser Island, June 2001).*

*We're finding that's a bone of contention especially with this last road closure, and the beach closure from here south. There's a lot of areas that are being restricted to people a lot fitter than you and I. If you want to go into Boronia Lakes and all that area you've got to be prepared to walk. It's too bloody far for the likes of my wife and I to walk in there anymore and yet it is some of the prettiest areas on the island ('Neville', Fraser Island resident, September 2001).*

Similar concerns were also aired in more public forums such as at the Fraser Island Association (FIA) meetings I attended, and continue to be expressed through the media.<sup>3</sup> The same complaints were not made on Penguin Island.

On Penguin Island the physical boundaries mainly take the form of unobtrusive boardwalks across the island on which visitors are instructed to stay. These serve the purpose of preventing trampling of breeding habitats for wildlife, but also provide an easily accessible pathway that circumnavigates the island for visitors.

Again on Fraser Island the physical demarcation between human space and wildlife space is more strongly stated and enforced. The practice of hazing dingoes (see Chapters Seven and Eight) is designed to keep dingoes away from designated human spaces, such as camping grounds, through re-creating fear in dingoes. As examined in Chapter Eight, the assumption behind this in the FIDMS is that it is natural for

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<sup>3</sup> See, for example, ABC News (2007), Callinan (2008), Fraser Coast Chronicle (2008), Gardiner (2008), Sunshine Coast Daily (2008).

dingoes to fear humans but dingoes have lost this fear through habituation; therefore, hazing is employed to make them fearful again. On its own though, hazing has not been considered a successful enough deterrent and attacks have still occurred. It may also be that people need to fear, and respect, dingoes. This could be brought about by enhanced understanding of dingoes and their behaviours, but how is this best achieved? Does it help if people can relate on personal and emotional levels to the animal that needs to be understood (Milton 2002)? I think this may be the case and, if so, anthropomorphism (as discussed in 10.2) may be useful.

A current popular strategy for separating people and dingoes on Fraser Island relies on erecting fencing. This commenced shortly after the fatality when key camping areas in the central sections of the island were fenced. Kingfisher Bay Resort and Village was fenced in 2004 and in 2007 the Queensland Premier, Anna Bligh, announced that the state government would spend \$750 000 erecting more fences on the island (Herald Sun 2007). This forms part of the third strategy in the FIDMS which, as discussed in Chapter Eight, is consistent with the construction of distinct spaces for human and wildlife.

On both islands these measures serve to create and maintain physical boundaries between people and wildlife whilst also maintaining, through positively reinforcing, the ideology of separation for both managers and island visitors.

## **10.2 The Role of Anthropomorphism**

A further difference on the two islands is the use of anthropomorphic discourse about wildlife, particularly in that given to island visitors and residents as interpretation. As discussed earlier, it is beneficial to examine the use of anthropomorphism

because it is one example of discourse and because it is one (of many) ways images of wildlife are constructed. These constructions then influence the way the wildlife is perceived and interacted with, by both managers and tourists (see Figure 10.1).

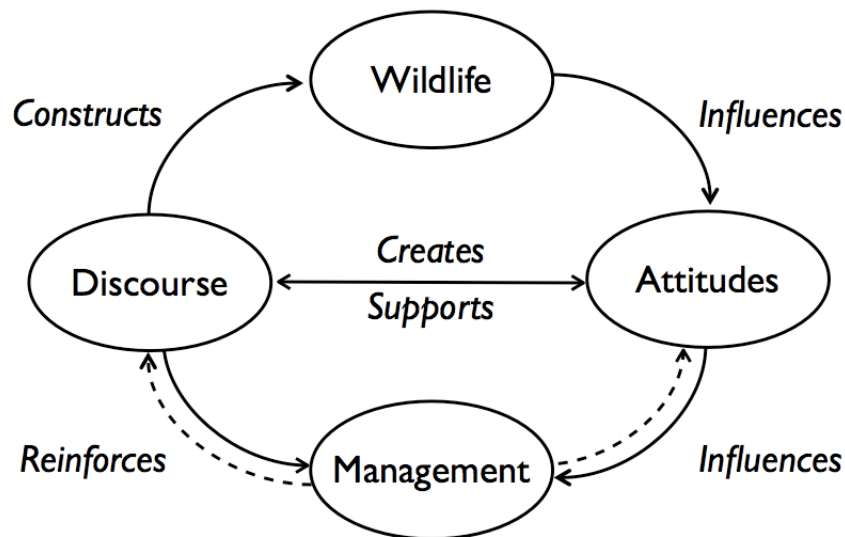


Figure 10.1: The Cycle of Discourse

In this cyclic relationship, discourse (for example, anthropomorphism) constructs an image of wildlife that in turn influences the perceptions and attitudes of members of the wildlife tourism community toward that wildlife. These perceptions and attitudes influence management policies and practices which are reinforced through discourse. Other relationships also exist in this cycle. Management actions may influence community attitudes, while discourse and attitudes are mutually created and supported.

On Fraser Island anthropomorphic language is strongly avoided in material produced by QPWS. There was very little evidence of it in any of the large quantities of material I collected, and it could be argued that this amounts to the type of anthropodenial discussed in Chapter Six. Such anthropodenial might prevent those

people targeted in the educational/interpretive material from making a connection with dingoes that could enhance their understanding of, and empathy for, dingoes in mutually beneficial ways.

Anthropomorphic discourse is also avoided by other sources of information about dingoes on the island. For example, Kingfisher Bay Resort and Village (KBRV) offers evening talks by their staff for guests and one of these is entitled a ‘Dingo Talk’. Here too anthropomorphic language is notably absent. Guests are given basic scientific information about the dingo population on the island that includes information about ‘breeding’ and ‘seasonal behaviour’. Before QPWS started tagging dingoes in 2003 and KBRV was fenced in 2004, individual dingoes frequently sighted around the resort had been named by staff based on their physical characteristics (*e.g.*, ‘white sock’ and ‘boofhead’). Since tagging, all dingoes are identified by the colour combination of their individual tags (*e.g.*, ‘red/red/blue’). A small number of long term residents on the island are the only people I have heard refer to a Fraser Island dingo by a human name (see also McKay in Callinan 2008).

This is different on Penguin Island. During the talks at the Penguin Experience (Figure 9.3) penguins are afforded distinctly human-like characteristics. I attended ten of these talks over six years, and heard them given by four different rangers. Each one, without fail, used anthropomorphic language during their descriptions of the penguins and their behaviours. The penguin breeding boxes, for example, are referred to as “apartments” or “bedrooms.” Some of the penguins have been given human names, such as “Perry” and “Lou”. The audience is informed that the individual penguins can be “told apart by their faces”, the same way humans initially distinguish between themselves, and are described using words usually reserved for

humans that describe their physical features (such as “handsome”) and behavioural characteristics (such as “naughty”).

The audience laugh at these interpretations, are obviously engaged with the talk and show definite empathy with the penguins. This informal and often anthropomorphic use of language does not seem to detract from the informative message conveyed about penguin behaviour in the wild, and how they are cared for at the Penguin Experience. The lack of hard scientific language used by the staff seems deliberate, and enables the audience to make a connection that is more likely to result in enhanced understanding of the penguins and ultimately, it is hoped, care for them.<sup>4</sup>

Taking this further, I would argue that attributing human-like characteristics to penguins in this way assists with their conservation while denying the existence of such characteristics in dingoes hinders their conservation. I am not the first to draw a link between anthropomorphism and conservation. Mitman (2005) does this in his examination of the management of elephants in Kenya. He shows that in the 1960s, when hard science governed management decisions, thousands of elephants were killed to control the size of the population. However, in the following decade when the public became aware of the social life of elephant families, this new perspective led to the promotion of the elephant as an endangered species. Consequently,

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<sup>4</sup> This may appear a contentious claim, and is one that has been assumed and not interrogated within the constraints of this thesis. Up until the mid-1990s the argument that nature-based experiences encouraged tourists to adopt more environmentally responsible behaviour and attitudes was commonly used to justify this type of tourism (Russell 1994), and authors argued that education should be a critical component of ecotourism experiences (Alcock 1991, Bramwell and Lane 1993, Roggenbuck 1987). However, there was little empirical research that demonstrated the specific benefits of education programmes (Uzzell 1989) despite the fact that environmental education held a long-standing tradition in park management (Knudson *et al.* 1995). Thankfully this has changed in the last decade, pioneered by studies such as Orams (1997) whose research provided evidence that education can be an effective mean of managing tourists’ interactions with wildlife.

recognition of similarities between human and elephant social life motivated public pressure for elephant conservation.

Anthropologists, as discussed in Chapter Four, traditionally separated humans and animals based on their perceived acquisition of culture. For animal behaviourists, the argument for and against the applicability of thinking about animals in human terms seems to be based on whether or not animals are attributed with having consciousness (see, for example, Wynne 2004). The scientific mantra that studies must be conducted objectively may also have a large influence, however, with anthropodenial being employed against the possibility of emotions (through recognising a connection with animals) interfering with neutrality. For anthropologists, and other social scientists, I would argue that discourse on, and decisions about, anthropomorphism should not shy away from emotion<sup>5</sup> and should consider the potential merits of this approach for both people and animals and for their interactions.

Instead of asking what is wrong with anthropomorphism, perhaps it is more fruitful to focus on what is right about it. Interpreting an animal's behaviour in the same terms as we use for our own behaviour, feelings or emotions enables us to have some empathy with the animal and creates a social bond. As Shepard (cited in de Waal 2001:7) explains, "Anthropomorphism binds our continuity with the rest of the natural world. It generates our desire to identify with them" and learn about them.

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<sup>5</sup> This has also been argued by anthropologist Kay Milton in her text *Loving Nature: Towards an ecology of emotion* (2002).

### **10.3 Re-constructing People and Wildlife: Re-constructing Management<sup>6</sup>**

My argument is, that if tourists have a better understanding of the wildlife they have come to see and acknowledge their own place and responsibility in the wildlife tourism setting, then they may be more accepting of a range of behaviours from, and thus a range of interactions with, particular species. To date I see very little attempt to facilitate this on Fraser Island though it does occur to some extent on Penguin Island.

Of all tourist forms, wildlife tourism, as a subset of ecotourism, would seem to have the most potential to facilitate an enhanced acceptance of diverse wildlife behaviours and interactions. “The most visible values that ecotourism expresses concerns the natural environment, and those values are supposed to lead ecotourists both to appreciate and to protect nature” (West and Carrier 2004:485).<sup>7</sup> Ecotourists tend to travel with the intent of experiencing and learning about nature (Eagles and Cascagnette 1995:22) and ecotourism seems to aim for a more ecocentric, rather than anthropocentric, approach to this experience (Olwig 2004:492). Thus it is reasonable to assume that wildlife tourists travel with the intent of both experiencing and learning about wildlife, and are similarly more open to ecocentric aims.

Although the basic purity of ecotourism has in many cases eroded (through the pressure of marketing and product development), Fennell (2006) believes the ideals of ecotourism are still worth pursuing. He argues for a framework based on

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<sup>6</sup> Some of the material in this section has been accepted for publication in Burns (in press).

<sup>7</sup> The notion of human protection of nature is itself, of course, a particular type of construct and open to debate (as discussed in Chapter Six). The desire to protect, for example, can be seen as a reflection of anthropocentric ‘power’ and part of the politics of power over nature.

reverence as a manner by which to resurrect this field and provide it with a more ethical foundation (p197). This would see the wildlife tourism community functioning within a framework of ethical reverence and responsibility toward wildlife. Thus wildlife tourists might then be more willing than other types of tourists to accept transgressions from wildlife behaviours that are, in other circumstances, constructed as normal (*e.g.*, Chapter Eight). That is, the normalcy of a variety of interactions, whether perceived as both positive or negative, are viewed as an acceptable part of the wildlife tourism experience. Of course, this has to be accompanied by caution and care with an ethic based on reverence for the rights of nature.

In Chapter Six, the view of nature that sees humans in a realm of culture that is in opposition to, and therefore necessarily separated from, nature was explained (Figure 10.2). This has been used as an analytical tool throughout the thesis.



Figure 10.2: Human (Sphere One) versus Nonhuman (Sphere Two) Spaces

In this model, people are constructed as existing solely within the confines of Sphere One, where in the context of wildlife tourism this human and cultural space also becomes a tourist space. This ignores the desires of some, who in wildlife tourism settings might want to be considered within, and have their experiences of wildlife within, Sphere Two. For many wildlife tourists, an aim of their ecotourism



experience is to get away from the confines of Sphere One and immerse themselves in Sphere Two.

Concurrently, wildlife are constructed as existing solely in Sphere Two, although they are not aware of this human devised construction and have no say in it. Thus, it would be reasonable to assume that they do not understand the notion of transgressing the boundaries and moving out of this designated space (as discussed in Chapter Eight). Similarly, some tourists may not want wildlife to invade their space<sup>8</sup> yet are unaware, or not respectful, of the space that belongs to wildlife in this two sphere model. This perception is linked to the anthropocentric world view of human power and dominance over other life forms that gives people the right to freely, and safely, access all spaces.

Both Penguin Island and Fraser Island managers construct and maintain boundaries between these spaces (Figure 10.2), and educate and legislate to protect them. On Fraser Island the people (through fines, fences and interpretive material) and the dingoes (through culling, hazing and fencing) are taught to stay in their respective spaces. On Penguin Island the people are more directly and actively managed than the penguins, with boundaries (boardwalks and interpretive material) aimed at teaching people not penguins about the designated spaces. Although Fraser Island is constructed and marketed by the tourism industry as an ecotourism destination it is very much promoted as a playground for people. It is treated as a Sphere One: human space. In contrast, Penguin Island is treated as a natural space: one into which humans are permitted for controlled periods of time, but remains the domain

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<sup>8</sup> An example of this can be found in the comments of guests at the Kingfisher Bay Resort on Fraser Island. Prior to the resort being fenced, dingoes occasionally jumped onto the verandahs of some of the ground floor resort units. This was greeted with delight and fascination by some guests, but generated fear and complaint to resort staff by others.

of the wildlife and its supporting nature. Both management strategies support the separation of people and nature, but on Fraser Island this starts from the premise that Sphere One is dominant and on Penguin Island from the premise that Sphere Two is the most important.

West and Carrier (2004) warn ecotourism promoters and managers about the dangers of seeing nature as separate from the human interests and activities that construct it, provide its shape and make it knowable. Instead of focussing on separation, there is need to recognise that both spaces can overlap. The boundaries around the spaces are a human construct and dingoes may walk through human space, such as a campground on Fraser Island, for example, without realising they have crossed a notional line.

I am not the only one to notice tourist spaces and the constructed views within them, though there does seem to be very little written about this, especially in the context of wildlife tourism. Other authors who have commented on this include Ryan *et al.* (2000:151) who noted that “Within nature there are tourism spaces, often well-intentioned because both tourist and nature needs to be protected, but nonetheless spaces in which decisions based on value systems have been made.”

This model of separation is, of course, not the only view of nature that exists in the Western world,<sup>9</sup> nor is it necessarily the most important concept of nature amongst ecotourists. However, it does seem to inform understandings of wildlife management that are based on the dominant interpretations of the industrialised world (Suchet 2001:130). As Suchet (2001:132) cautions, “people working in

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<sup>9</sup> For a table depicting a variety of other views, perspectives and metaphors that link the environment with sustainability see Macbeth (2005:970).

environmental management and other areas must be aware of their own world-views and assumptions, otherwise they risk imposing these on local people [and wildlife] and continuing colonial practices.”

It is my contention that tourists choosing to engage in wildlife tourism in nature-based settings might not want this separation, and might be more willing to accept the consequences of not being separated, than other types of tourists; that is, if they wanted fences between themselves and the wildlife then they would have visited a zoo. In a more romantic view, for example, of the relationship between humans and nature, humans are seen to be a part of nature in landscapes that reflect lengthy and close association between humans and the physical environment. The metaphysical base for this can be found in the organic, or holistic, paradigm guiding an ecocentric approach to environmental ethics that sees humans as living in, and being a part of, the wider biophysical environment (Fennell 2006:195) or members of a “biotic community” (Callicott 2006:128). This may be closer to what informs ecotourism (Olwig 2004:492), and therefore a useful view for wildlife managers to explore with the goal of better understanding these types of tourists. This type of co-existence, called for in Chapter Seven, will work best if both people and wildlife are considered part of the natural environment.<sup>10</sup>

It is important to discuss this model of seeing humans as part of nature in relation to Fraser Island where the consequences of negative interactions with the wildlife are more serious for people than on Penguin Island. Although there has been a decrease in tourist numbers on Fraser Island since 2002 (see Appendix One), it remains a

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<sup>10</sup> If recognising people in nature (Sphere Two, Figure 10.2) is not wanted or considered too difficult to implement in management practice, then an alternative could be to give wildlife a cultural role, as indigenous Australians did with the dingo (Franklin 2006:49, Meggitt 1965, Parker 2006), thus allowing inclusion of wildlife in Sphere One.

popular tourist destination and this is unlikely to change. There is a need, therefore, for a management shift, both conceptual and practical, particularly in relation to people. Management practice has been guided by ideological thinking reminiscent of colonial periods when humans and nature were seen as separate and humans ability to control nature assumed (Adams 2003a, Suchet 1999). Discourse in the FIDMS (EPA 2001b) blames dingo attacks on habituation that results from people feeding dingoes,<sup>11</sup> and construction of humans as interfering with nature in this way suggests we are something other than nature (Aitken 2004: 53). This is reflected in current strategies, such as fencing, that reinforce the separation of people and nature.

The shift could come in adopting a more ecocentric ethical stance and recognising people as an integral part of, rather than separate from, the system which QPWS manages. Current tourism and management literature advocate a holistic systems approach in theory (Burns 2004a, Worboys *et al.* 2005) that takes into account all variables and is, therefore, inclusive of both people and wildlife.

While still focussing on the separateness of people and wildlife, the educational focus in the FIDMS encourages managers to become interpreters of the wildlife experience for tourists, and not just mediators or control agents. This has taken the form of an increased amount of literature for tourists to read, including brochures and signage on the island, and contact with rangers at camp sites and as visitors disembark from ferries. This increasing recognition of the need to manage people is important because not managing people well enough frequently leads to a need to act on anthropocentric values and punish wildlife for being 'evil' (Howard 2007).

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<sup>11</sup> This relies on an argument that habituation is not natural and interactions between people and dingoes are not natural, yet both have occurred for as long as there has been contact between people and dingoes.

There are, however, problems with the QPWS 'Be Dingo-Smart' educational message. Firstly, it is difficult to ensure the message is received and understood and, secondly, the message comes from a particular stance that is informed by values that are not shared by all (Hyttén and Burns 2007a). There is also danger that too much interpretation could turn visiting Fraser Island into a zoo-like experience, which is not expected or wanted by tourists in this setting. Answering questions about why they were visiting the island, tourists responded in the following ways:

*Fishing, beer. We've done it seven out of the last ten years.*

*Just wildlife, camping and beaches – a bit of sun.*

*Having a holiday, [we have] always wanted to come here.*

*Just to see whatever happens, and [experience the] wildlife.*

*[Fraser Island is] very special – it's very religious, sacred – you can sleep well at night and you can walk well with a natural stride – just no panic in your daily activities – it's a relaxed atmosphere.*

*That's the beauty of the place. We can come here and do a little bit of fishing, photography or just relax.*

*... just the dingoes, and rainforest.*

*Wildlife, camping, enjoy[ing] the environment.*

*The basic wildlife that is available – that's probably the main thing – and that it gives you a taste of being away from civilisation.*

In addition, people come to see what they have been informed through marketing campaigns to expect:

*I wanted to come because of all the nice things, the sands and all the things you hear about Fraser Island ... and because it's got World Heritage listing and it's pure and nature and stuff ('Michelle', resort guest, May 2004).*

Tourists want peace and relaxation, and natural beauty that comes with their choice of ecotourism setting in locations such as Fraser Island. Fencing and noticeboards with warnings and messages are the antithesis of that.

Key characteristics that sets apart ecotourists from other tourists is their desire to experience and be a part of natural settings, and their eco- or bio-centric ethical stance. Thus, ecotourism, more than any other form, offers the opportunity to manage in a holistic framework that includes people as a part of nature. Tourists in natural settings should be encouraged to see themselves as part of the environment and made aware that their actions within it can have far-reaching consequences, both for themselves and for the wildlife. Similarly, in this setting wildlife should be permitted to behave in ways that are natural with awareness by people that this may have consequences, both positive and negative, should they interact. Constructing the ecotourism setting in this way transfers a sense of responsibility to tourists. Managers, rather than assuming control of both people and wildlife, are relieved of some of the increasing burden of recreational management.

The FIDMS makes assumptions about what is natural dingo behaviour and what is not (as discussed in Chapter Eight), and aggression towards humans is constructed as unnatural. Consequently, dingoes displaying this unnatural behaviour must be dealt with (*i.e.*, killed). I think it may serve the interests of both QPWS and island visitors to construct dingo aggression towards people as natural behaviour, and make people aware of this as one of the dangers they choose to face when entering this setting.

Encouraging tourists to be aware of their responsibility, for themselves and to nature, may be a positive step forward in ecotourism settings. If tourists are aware that wildlife (and other forms of nature) belong in the ecotourism setting, then they are

more likely to be accepting of their behaviours. Taking this further, attacks from wildlife would be constructed as normal. Hunting and aggressive play is natural behaviour for dingoes (Corbett 1995) and, because they are wild animals, tourists should not expect them to behave in the same way as domesticated ones. If attacks are perceived as a normal, rather than abnormal, part of the reality of some nature-based settings, then tourists face the decision of whether to visit the destination or go elsewhere. The responsibility is theirs.

“Within the natural area, the tourist is treated to various constructed views within which selected aspects of nature are presented” (Ryan *et al.* 2000:151). On both Fraser Island and Penguin Island nature has traditionally been presented as benign. Only recently on Fraser Island has the image of the dingo changed, but this still has not altered the overall construction of the island as a safe place to visit (despite it being home to other potentially dangerous animals). If QPWS were more public about the dangers, constructing the island and the wildlife experiences differently, this might forewarn tourists better and help to minimise perceived negative interactions.

Rather than focussing on managing people for wildlife or wildlife for people in a construction that separates people from nature, to maintain the integrity of the wildlife tourism setting managers should promote awareness of people as part of the setting. This has the potential to remove some of the anthropocentric dominance that underlies management and views of nature. Constructed in this way, dingoes frequenting high-use human areas such as campgrounds and resorts are doing something natural rather than crossing a known line between human and animal

spaces.<sup>12</sup> Consequently, this is not a problematic behaviour and does not warrant the animal being killed. Similarly, this construction recognises that Fraser Island is not a zoo, and fences that separate people and nature are not natural. There is potential for successful application of this approach on Fraser Island and in other nature-based tourism settings where ecotourists are more likely to be accepting of natural features, and dangers, of an area and, therefore, easier to manage in this ‘hands off’ scenario.

This approach, however, is of course not suitable for everyone who finds themselves in a wildlife tourism setting. In both the case studies explored for this research the type of tourism was nature-based and focussed on free-ranging wildlife. A zoo, for example, can also be considered a wildlife tourism setting (Figure 4.4). Here the boundaries between people and wildlife are strongly demarcated and tourists do not expect them to be otherwise. Also, as discussed previously, the motivations for and expectations of travel may differ amongst ecotourists and this group of people is not necessarily homogenous. It may be useful, therefore, to distinguish further between types of ecotourists in making this argument.

Weaver (2001a, 2001b) distinguishes between ‘hard’ ecotourism and ‘soft’ ecotourism, where hard ecotourism is characterised by small groups of travellers who are usually more environmentally aware and seek challenging experiences in less-serviced nature-based settings, and soft ecotourism involves larger numbers in serviced sites having a more superficial experience of nature (Fennell and Weaver

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<sup>12</sup> This construction exists in other wildlife tourism settings. New York State’s Adirondack Park, for example, is home to an estimated 6000 black bears and “human-bear interactions at the Park’s nearly 100 campgrounds are commonplace.” (Gore *et al.* 2006b:36).



2005:378). Using these categories, the people-in-nature scenario may work better for 'hard' rather than 'soft' ecotourists.<sup>13</sup>

## 10.4 Conclusion

For QPWS and DEC to achieve sustainable wildlife tourism on Fraser Island and Penguin Island, in accordance with the guidelines for world heritage listing and principles for ecotourism, they need to effectively manage both the wildlife and the people who interact with that wildlife. Attempts to do this on Fraser Island have focused on reducing all interactions regardless of whether or not they may be perceived by tourists as desirable or undesirable. By removing all interactions with dingoes, QPWS are diminishing the returns of this type of ecotourism experience on Fraser Island for the tourists.<sup>14</sup> Interpretive material aimed at educating tourists and other island visitors or residents about the negatives of wildlife interactions (where the dominant message is that the people might get hurt and the wildlife will get killed) has increased. Following a study commissioned to evaluate the current material and suggest ways it might be improved (Beckmann and Savage 2003, QPWS 2003a, 2003b), much larger fines were introduced for human misdemeanours (such as feeding, either directly or indirectly), and their enforcement publicised through local media (for example, Green 2005 and Williams 2006). On the wildlife side, fences continue to be constructed to minimise interactions, and the 'problem' wildlife killed in accordance with the FIDMS. But clearly these interventions are not working. The dingoes are still considered a nuisance and are still being killed,

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<sup>13</sup> However, this is not of course always the case as hard ecotourists, venturing into less touristed areas, may have little interest in wider impacts of their actions and soft ecotourists may provide more financial assistance towards the preservation of habitat, for example (Fennell and Weaver 2005:379).

<sup>14</sup> Norberg (1999, cited in Tremblay 2002:167) maintains that sightings of potentially dangerous animals provide opportunities for adventure and life memories.

and both managers and residents are frustrated by this ongoing, time-consuming issue.

Time and management training will hopefully see a shift in focus that ensures park managers expect to manage people as a crucial part of the natural system, and this may alleviate some of their frustration. On Fraser Island the recordings of negative dingo interactions are increasing and, in line with the current policy of killing problem animals, this means the rate of dingo deaths is likely, if anything, to increase. Part of finding a way to ensure the sustainability of wildlife tourism on Fraser Island lies in being more critical of management decisions and closely examining, and acknowledging, for whom it is being done.

Fraser Island is an extreme case, as not all interactions between wildlife and people result in people being harmed and wildlife being killed.<sup>15</sup> However, it is not an isolated case as people are killed in wildlife tourism settings by other types of wildlife, and in many cases the number of human fatalities far exceed the single death on Fraser Island. In the province of Alberta, Canada, for example, bears (black and grizzly) caused 42 serious or fatal human injuries between 1960 and 1998 (Herrero and Higgins 2003).<sup>16</sup>

Nevertheless, there are lessons that can be taken from the Fraser Island case that are applicable to others. In all wildlife tourism settings, the needs of both people and wildlife must be understood before they can be effectively managed. When the aspirations of tourists are clear and the impact on wildlife is obvious, there is a need

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<sup>15</sup> As Callicott (2006:128) reminds us, not all human-environment conflicts are life and death issues. The choice between killing and conserving is rarely faced. Instead, most choices are between biodiversity and human lifestyles.

<sup>16</sup> For further information on bear attacks in North America see Herrero (2002).

to acknowledge who is being prioritised in management and why. The aims of the management need to be transparent, and the values and constructions that underpin management choices and decisions require recognition (Hytten and Burns 2007a).

“Walking the management tightrope between keeping wildlife wild and tourists safe” (Thompson *et al.* 2003:46) requires complex balancing of management priorities. Strategies for managing interactions on both islands attempt to manage people for wildlife and wildlife for people, but there is usually a clear dominance of one over the other. This is not uncommon. Where wildlife is perceived to threaten humans, managing for the protection of humans will always be prioritised. Legislation that then enacts the killing of wildlife for fear of people being harmed, demonstrates an obvious anthropocentric view of management that puts humans first. This is a situation that managers on Penguin Island have not had to face. Here, any threats have been towards the wildlife, such as when tourists venture off the designated paths and boardwalks and disturb pelican chicks before they have matured sufficiently to fly safely away. One DEC staff member I interviewed was extremely upfront about putting penguins ahead of people:

*So penguins are the first priority, people probably a very close second to penguins. Hopefully teaching the people to look after these guys means that when they see a wild one they don't disturb it too much, that they respect the island, ... teaching them basically about the birds, to look and not touch, ... [makes them realise] how important they are ('Toni', DEC ranger, February 2003).*

Regardless of the specifics of each situation, managers have a crucial role to play in sustainability. This has long been recognised, in parks and other protected areas, with regards to the conservation of natural features. Traditionally this occurred in a context in which those natural features were deemed to be separate from human

ones. Separating humans from nature only exacerbates the problem, and certainly is not proving to be effective in terms of sustainable tourism on Fraser Island. Consequently, one way to more effectively manage might be to construct people as part of the overall natural system, and not separate from it. This is difficult to implement in practice, as most problems are easier to conceptualise as isolated variables and then manage as such. However, once constructions are recognised and people re-categorised, we may be able to see a way forward, not just on Fraser Island but in all wildlife tourism settings.

Is it possible to manage in the best interests of both people and wildlife, and keep both happy? Clearly for wildlife to be sustainable this is what managers must aim to achieve, and the success obviously depends on many factors. Crucial, however, is an understanding of what tourists want, coupled with what wildlife needs, and why certain management decisions are made. Locating people in nature and shifting some of the responsibility from managers to tourists may reduce the heavy burden of recreation for managers, provide more satisfaction for tourists, greater conservation values for wildlife, and an enhanced wildlife tourism experience for all.



# SECTION FOUR:

## CONCLUDING THE

## JOURNEY

This final section, containing only one chapter (Eleven), concludes the thesis and summarises the two case studies within the context of wildlife tourism. Tying together the central arguments, key theoretical material and empirical data presented in earlier sections, this section reviews the need for interdisciplinary engagement between tourism, anthropology and environmental science to enhance understanding of the issues confronted by wildlife tourism. It also comments on the value and utility of the notion of community, advocates the need to challenge constructions commonly underpinning wildlife management and argues for the coexistence of people and wildlife. Recommendations for further research are also made.



## SECTION FOUR: CONCLUDING THE JOURNEY

### CHAPTER ELEVEN

#### **Conclusion**

##### **11.0 Introduction**

We are not inherently cruel, but we do have the tools and capabilities to be extremely cruel (Erlich 2002). This distinction is important as it places the responsibility for human behaviour in human hands. It also forces the recognition that the patterns and interpretations of our relationship with other animals changes over time and place. To best understand those changes, we must employ a diverse anthropological toolkit (Fuentes 2006:130).

This final chapter ties together the central arguments and key theoretical material relied upon in the thesis. It begins with a summary of the arguments for an anthropological engagement with the scholarly fields of both tourism and environmental science and demonstrates the value of anthropology's contribution to these essentially interdisciplinary, or at least multidisciplinary, discourses that inform wildlife tourism. The concept of a wildlife tourism community has been central in the thesis, and this discussion is also summarised here. A lens of social constructionism informed the analysis in this thesis, and its applicability to highlighting issues central to wildlife tourism is restated. The chapter then turns to the argument for the coexistence of people and wildlife, the need to challenge the



nature/cultural dualism and the anthropodenial apparent in management discourse and practice. Recommendations made throughout the thesis are summarised in the penultimate section, where some suggestions are made for future research. Finally, the conclusion reminds us that wildlife tourism, as a form of ecotourism, has potential to be sustainable for both people and wildlife and offer interactions that can be positive for both, but only if the colonial legacy of separation is challenged and current discourses that promote the creation and maintenance of boundaries between people and wildlife are reconstructed.

## **11.1 Environmental Anthropology and Tourism**

Chapter Four discussed the history of anthropology's engagement with tourism, noting that it took some time for tourism to be recognised as a legitimate field of anthropological enquiry and demonstrating that tourism was a suitable, albeit long neglected, topic for anthropological study. The argument was made that 'the anthropology of tourism' and 'the anthropology of the environment' (more commonly called 'environmental anthropology') can productively merge in a field of 'the anthropology of wildlife tourism.' The reasons for this are primarily twofold; this type of engagement can have benefits for the environment as well as benefits for the discipline of anthropology.

Anthropologists have suffered a collective loss of confidence in recent years (Ingold 2007:14, Kapferer 2007), and authors such as Erickson (2006) argue that anthropology needs to engage with current issues to regain its public presence. While it was not the intention of this thesis to solve any modern malady faced by anthropology as a discipline, it has been my intention to demonstrate anthropology's

applicability to contemporary environmental issues, such as wildlife tourism. Thus, bringing together concepts from environmental science and anthropology has provided a unifying structure throughout this thesis.

It is encouraging to discover that in recent years the value of an anthropological perspective on environmental issues is undisputed. Fuentes (2006:130), for example, claims there is compelling need to draw more from anthropological approaches. Thus, in the first decade of a new century we find ourselves in the very positive position that anthropologists have now paid “substantial attention” to both tourism and to the environment (West and Carrier 2004:483).

This growth in attention is part of an increasing recognition of the value of social science knowledge and research on, and about, environmental issues. This is itself part of a trend toward a more interdisciplinary, or at least multidisciplinary, approach to environmental problems (as discussed in Chapter Four). Currently we find ourselves in the situation in which transformations in research practice and the associated researchers to undertake interdisciplinary research are essential if we are to address the complexity of current environmental problems (Moore *et al.* 2007).

Anthropological themes (holism, integration, and adaptation) emphasize the large range of concerns affecting people that the discipline endeavours to encompass, and the philosophies driving this perspective (universalism and cultural relativism). Breadth alone ensures that anthropological areas of study overlap with many other disciplines and it is in these overlapping regions that anthropology has begun to contribute meaningfully to discourse about the environment.

Despite the recent and very positive attention paid by anthropology to tourism and the environment much remains to be done, particularly in the overlaps between the two and in anthropology's conjunction with both ecotourism and wildlife tourism.

For example:

Anthropology can play an important role in helping to create an appreciation of the diversity in human landscapes and the related great variety in approaches to ecotourist developments that can be enjoyed if ecotourism takes seriously its concern with local perspectives and practices. This may be a small but significant next step in a critical engagement with this rapidly growing industry (Olwig 2004:492).

Anthropological research has focussed less on ecotourism, and even less on wildlife tourism. This lack of engagement is not due to its lack of applicability, but may be because anthropology is about people and therefore anthropologists fear to tread on the scholarly toes of disciplines that traditionally focus on animals. However, Curtin (2005:11) demonstrates theoretically the logic of taking a qualitative approach to wildlife tourism research; as an essentially qualitative discipline, this is an area to which anthropology can contribute. So too, the area of human-wildlife interactions is particularly applicable for anthropological enquiry and, although some anthropologists (for example, Mullin 1999, 2002 and Noske 1989, 1993, 1997, 2004) have commented on animals and on relationships between humans and animals, anthropologists in the field of human-wildlife interactions remain extremely rare. Benthall (2007:3) notes that there is a richness of anthropological material on the human-animal interface in a wide range of contexts, and that material could be very useful for understanding human-animal interactions in wildlife settings.

This thesis has done both. By situating some forms of wildlife tourism in ecotourism (Figure 4.3), I have examined the relationship of anthropology with both

types of tourism. I hope, as a consequence, this will encourage anthropology to pay more attention to ecotourism as a topic of study, and embrace the idea of an anthropology of environmental tourism. It involves an array of intriguing processes that interest anthropologists, and the interface between people and wildlife is just one.

## **11.2 Wildlife Tourism's Community**

A further contribution of this thesis has been its description and discussion of a wildlife tourism community. The troubled notion of community was explored in Chapter Five, where its use and function in both anthropology and the wider social sciences was examined. From this, it was declared that the word 'community' on its own is practically meaningless and consequently requires coupling with some other descriptive term to provide it with context and thus meaning.

Throughout this thesis the term 'wildlife tourism community' has been used very broadly to encompass all stakeholders in any wildlife tourism venture. The difficulties of such breadth were recognised and addressed, but the more encompassing definition has been preferred over a narrower one that would have neglected the needs and very real contributions and concerns of all stakeholders.

An early research aim of this thesis was to focus on the influence of the host community on sustainable wildlife tourism primarily because hosts were identified as a stakeholder group that had been frequently overlooked in the tourism, and in particular the wildlife tourism, literature. This has been most common in developing or third world countries, and for indigenous hosts (Burns 2004b). Consequently hosts have been discussed throughout in some detail; however, it has been clear in

my research that although hosts are a vital part of the overall wildlife tourism community, wildlife tourism and its sustainability can not be understood in the holistic manner required if focus is maintained solely on hosts. Thus, a finding from analysis of the case study material has been that a focus on host community on its own is insufficient and lacks explanatory power. My work has demonstrated that there is need for a more complex understanding and model of community than a narrow 'host' approach allows, and this constitutes part of my theoretical contribution.

The relationship between community and sustainability has been explored throughout the case studies, where it was noted that relationships between stakeholders on Penguin Island are generally more harmonious than on Fraser Island. Sustainability should be a goal for all wildlife tourism ventures, to protect the economic, social and environmental interests of all members of the wildlife tourism community. Yet this is difficult to achieve. The lack of homogeneity both within and between various stakeholder groups can be seen as a barrier to sustainable wildlife tourism due to the inability to find a consensual voice. However, this diversity can also offer solutions previously unthought of by a dominant management group. As identified throughout the thesis, different stakeholders and individuals may not share the same perceptions of, attitudes toward, and values about wildlife and this will affect their interactions with the wildlife and with each other. Consequently, "it is essential to realise that people have many diverse ways of relating to and understanding 'animals' and 'wildlife'" (Suchet 2001:129). Challenges for management lie in identifying key stakeholders in a wildlife tourism community, recognising their diverse perspectives, and engaging their support in

ways that allow for enhanced participation, empowerment and ultimately meaningful collaboration with each other.

### **11.3 Social Construction of Wildlife Tourism**

Analysis of the data collected was informed by a social constructionist view of discourse analysis. Discourse matters because discourses have the power to produce social realities that are experienced as real and solid. The views of wildlife that are produced and made real through tourism and management discourses cannot be fully understood without reference to the discourses that give them meaning. Once these views are understood, they can be challenged.

Social constructionism offers a valuable lens through which to examine wildlife tourism and the management of human-wildlife interactions in wildlife tourism settings. It has been used to argue that the dominant way we understand wildlife tourism, the concepts and categories used and the consequent management decisions made, are the products of particular periods of Western cultural history and depend upon prevalent social, political and economic influences (Dale 2001). The case study material enabled the adoption of a critical stance toward these assumed ways of understanding, by exposing the context and realisation of power relationships between stakeholders in the wildlife tourism community.

Employing a lens of social constructionism also allowed a focus on the social, political and cultural processes by which certain human-wildlife interactions are defined as unacceptably risky and subsequently actionable (Hajer 1995:44). This was clearly demonstrated on Fraser Island through analysis of the variety of management strategies that have been implemented to enforce the zero-tolerance

approach to interactions pursued by QPWS. These responses, to interactions between people and dingoes that resulted in one human death in 2001, reflect the political nature of the agenda setting (Hannigan 1995:30).

Of course, discourse constitutes only one of a number of ways of studying and understanding interactions. The construction of wildlife and people and their interactions in wildlife tourism settings highlighted throughout this thesis is an example of only one of many possible constructions. However, at least in terms of management decisions and practices, it seems the dominant one. Multiple constructions are possible, as discussed in Chapter Three, and even desirable (*e.g.*, Suchet 2001). Therefore, I have suggested a reconstruction to challenge the separation of people and wildlife in a model that recognises people as part of nature. Location in this space shifts the responsibility of actions and behaviours of tourists and visitors in natural settings from managers to the tourists and visitors themselves.

The title of this thesis, “Lines in the Sand”, is also indicative of the social constructionism lens that has been utilised throughout. My argument is that the boundaries constructed between people and wildlife can be as transient as lines drawn on the sandy beaches of the two case study islands. The phrase is a metaphor suggesting a paradox of definitive boundaries that are in fact ephemeral and subjective.

Ultimately, constructionism allowed us to see that there are alternative ways of thinking and behaving in the world, which in turn enabled a critical stance to be taken toward the dominant ways of understanding reality (Latour 2004) in the context of wildlife tourism. As Suchet (2001:123) reminds us, “There are many different ways of knowing because people interpret the world around them in many,

constantly changing ways.” The use of social constructionism as a tool for analysing dominant management paradigms and different interpretations of nature, wildlife and human-wildlife interactions, was demonstrated throughout the thesis. In particular, a social constructionist approach was used to deconstruct the assumptions made in the FIDMS (Chapter Eight), paving the way for the reconstructions posed in Chapter Ten.

#### **11.4 Coexistence of People and Wildlife in Wildlife Tourism Settings**

In calling for a reconstruction of the way human-wildlife interactions are viewed and managed in wildlife tourism settings the argument has been made for encouraging the coexistence of people and wildlife. I am not the first to examine the benefits of coexistence between people and wildlife. Woodroffe, Thirgood and Rabnowitz’s edited book (2005) on *People and Wildlife* is subtitled “Conflict or Coexistence?” and many of its contributors offer suggestions for reducing conflict while increasing the opportunities for coexistence. Quigley and Herrero (2005:47), for example, argue that “coexistence must be based on an ethic accepting the premise that human existence and quality of life is enhanced by the presence of wildlife” and that we must “become better stewards of our natural world” (p48). The problem with this approach, from the perspective of the arguments I have raised in this thesis, is that it remains couched in the ideology of human dominance over nature and wildlife having value purely for the positive benefits it can bring to humans; that is, wildlife only has utilitarian or extrinsic value in this approach. Thus, the reconstruction that places people in nature and as an equal part of it has not occurred in these discourses.



Close proximity to the wildlife has been identified as a key feature of the visitor experience (Curtin 2005:4). Many studies (*e.g.*, Davies *et al.* 1997, Orams 1997, 2002) of tourist expectations and desires have found that tourists most valued experiences involve some types of interaction with wildlife. Schanzel and McIntosh's (2000) research into viewing penguins in New Zealand, for example, revealed that the closer visitors got to the wildlife the higher they evaluated their level of satisfaction with the experience, and the most frequently mentioned cause of dissatisfaction was not being able to get close enough. Strategies for managing dingoes and people on Fraser Island aim to create and maintain boundaries that prevent all interactions thus failing to recognise that positive interactions are an important part of the tourist experience for some. QPWS is taking away this key feature of wildlife tourism on Fraser Island, while DEC provide it on Penguin Island. Penguin Island managers also create and maintain boundaries. In fact, Markwell (2001) notes that the tourist experience is often marked with physical boundaries that demarcate the wild from the tourist such as boardwalks and viewing platforms; thus the utilisation of these on Fraser Island and Penguin Island is not unique. However, on Penguin Island these boundaries are implemented in such a way that they still permit interactions between people and penguins both in captive (the Penguin Experience) and non-captive (natural habitat on the island) settings.

This desire for closeness with wildlife seems to epitomise a typically anthropomorphic view of the animal kingdom (Curtin 2005:4). Discourses that employ anthropomorphism as a way of constructing views of wildlife have been advocated throughout the thesis as a way forward for wildlife tourism. It has been demonstrated that they can enhance the emotional connection with wildlife for people and may ultimately assist visitor understanding and respect for wildlife. If

Curtin (2005) is correct and an anthropomorphic view is inherently present among wildlife tourists, though masked by the dominant discourses of anthropodenial, then accessing and harnessing these views should not be too difficult. If it is already there, then it should be easy to make use of.

Franklin (1999) also views anthropomorphism as potentially beneficial for relationships between people and animals. He suggests that people are increasingly aware of the extent to which they share their life and world with members of another species and are actively seeking possibilities for coexistence. If he is right, then the time is ripe for my proposal of discontinuing anthropodenial and striving for coexistence. Franklin (1999) links this awareness, which has triggered a change in views, to postmodernism. Postmodern relations between humans and animals are characterised by stronger emotional and moral content. This can be evidenced by the changing face of zoos, which have largely moved away from modern relations where visitors went to merely gaze and spectacle at an 'other' in a context where zoos were figured like prisons and aimed at separating people and nature (Franklin 1999).

Separation, modelled in the nature/culture dualism, was interrogated in Chapter Six, where it was noted that the ideals of urbanisation were based upon a notion of progress rooted in the conquest of nature by culture. Although urbanisation has further distanced people from nature, "this very dissociation has in part fuelled a resurgent interest in biophilia and a romanticised view of wild animals and the wholesale appropriation into consumer culture" (Wolch *et al.* 1995:736). This helps to explain the current popularity of wildlife tourism. Urbanisation and postmodernity have created a more romantic notion of nature and wildlife, and a

yearning for new, exciting, adventuresome, life-enriching, memorable and authentic experiences (Curtin 2005:11). Barriers get in the way of these experiences. Thus it could be argued that they are not wanted by some people, such as ecotourists, but are they necessary? Can sustainable wildlife tourism be achieved without them?

Analysing wildlife management and post-colonial discourse across a range of international case studies, Suchet (1999) calls for a “situated engagement” that advocates the need for engaging stakeholders and managing in ways that are appropriate to each situation or context. While this is certainly relevant in the case of wildlife tourism ventures it could be coupled with the idea posed by Patterson *et al.* (1998:423) of “situated freedom”, in which “recreationists” are free to experience wilderness in unique and variable ways within boundaries set by the environment itself. Markwell’s (2001) study of nature tourism sites in Borneo found that although boundaries between people and nature are common, tourists are generally happier if there is less mediation of their interactions at a tourist site and provides evidence that a lack of separation is better for tourists. I am not advocating that a lack of managed boundaries is appropriate in all contexts and certainly may not be welcomed by all stakeholders (as discussed in the previous chapter). Suchet (1999, 2001) is right, that context is important: “our relationships with other animals are complex and culturally contingent and contextual” (Fuentes 2006:130). However, moving away from the discourses of separation, that manifest in the need to erect fences between people and dingoes in a World Heritage Area, has merit in some contexts. When putting this into practice, there is a need for all human stakeholders to be informed of the potential dangers, both to themselves and to the wildlife, and for them to be aware of their responsibility for their own actions in the wildlife tourism setting.

## **11.5 Recommendations and Future Research**

Recommendations specific to the case studies, and for wildlife tourism in general, have been made throughout the thesis and are summarised below. For both cases, an aim of the research was to explore interactions between people and wildlife and understand the separation constructed between them. From these findings, suggestions can be made about ways in which wildlife tourism can function as satisfactorily as possible for all members of the wildlife tourism community, finding the right balance between providing for the needs of people and the needs of wildlife. Following these recommendations, suggestions are made for future possible research directions that consider the approaches outlined in this thesis.

On Penguin Island the relationships between stakeholders seem harmonious, visitors are happy with their wildlife experience, and managers are content with their work. The Penguin Experience and Discovery Centre has provided a facility in which people can safely view, and learn about, penguins. Penguins can still be viewed outside this captive facility. There is a need to ensure that the wildlife, and its habitat on the island, is protected. The responsibility of visitors to the wildlife in this setting could be enhanced by promoting an ecocentric environmental ethic that constructs people as part of nature.

On Fraser Island the wildlife tourism does not appear to be running as smoothly, and it was suggested that the relationships between some members of the wildlife tourism community need to change. Animosity between QPWS and island residents, for example, may be alleviated by increased transparency of QPWS decision-making and actions and increased stakeholder involvement with these processes.

Current management strategies on Fraser Island, such as hazing, are designed to instil fear of humans in dingoes. This fear is constructed as natural. I have suggested that this is a bi-directional relationship and that benefits may arise from people being taught to fear, or at least respect, dingoes. This could be incorporated into policies and strategically managed.

If QPWS were to construct dingo aggression toward people as natural behaviour, then attacks by dingoes would be constructed as normal. The onus of action is then transferred to visitors who are faced with the decision to accept this reality of the nature-based wildlife tourism setting they choose to enter, or go elsewhere.

Currently QPWS aims to minimise all interactions between people and dingoes on Fraser Island. This assumes that all interactions will be negative and disregards the desire by some people for positive encounters with wildlife. In North America bear management is aimed more at reducing bear-human *conflict* rather than interactions (e.g., Smith *et al.* 2005), and may provide a model that QPWS could utilise.

For both cases, and where appropriate in other national and international contexts, it was suggested that coexistence may work best if both people and wildlife are considered part of the same sphere; that is, humans are also seen as part of the natural environment and nature. This would require a management shift, away from traditional thinking that appears dominated by a colonial legacy reflecting a Judeo-Christian environmental ethic.

As an alternative, people within nature-based settings should be encouraged to see themselves as part of the environment and made aware of the consequences of their actions in these locations. Wildlife should be left as natural, not fenced in or out, and

not constructed to suit anthropocentric sensibilities. In this way, responsibility for appropriate behaviour is shifted away from the wildlife and on to the people. Responsibility is also shifted from managers to tourists in this ‘situated freedom.’ This approach may work best with ‘hard’ ecotourists.

Discourse and decisions about wildlife tourism and human-wildlife interactions should not shy away from emotion. Emotions are connected with values, which in turn inform human desire for, and perceptions of, interactions with wildlife. It has been argued throughout that managers need to acknowledge their value systems, and recognise that such systems are subjective. “Objectivity is destructive ... because it serves to mask the values underlying decisions and the exercise of power” (Macbeth 2005:972). Contesting the objectivity of practitioners, Macbeth (2005:973) argues for a “value-full” as opposed to a “value-free” science, one in which inbuilt biases are acknowledged and accounted for.

Overall, there is a need to be more critical of decisions made about managing wildlife and managing the interactions between people and wildlife. Once an understanding is reached of who makes the decisions and why they are made (what ideologies underpin them), alternatives (if required) can be pursued.

At the very least, managers should promote awareness at each destination that the tourists, visitors, residents and other stakeholders are *in* nature: in the natural space that is the domain of nature and wildlife. This occurs in some locations around the world. In the Tavoro Forest Park and Reserve on Fiji’s Bouma Island, for example, signs throughout the park warn tourists to “beware the birds of Tavoro, they own this land.” Similarly, Parks Canada issues a brochure to park visitors informing them

that “you share this natural area with bears and other wildlife that depend on it for their survival.” Such messages should be more widely used.

The topic of wildlife tourism obviously has many dimensions. There are a multitude of different ways it could have been examined in this thesis, and consequently many things that have not been covered and require further research. For example, the literature on environmental ethics has only been dealt with cursorily throughout and may assist with understanding motivations behind the actions of all members of the wildlife community. Attention has focussed on one major and one minor case study and further comparison with other wildlife tourism cases would be a valuable addition to this research. Such comparison would be useful at a domestic level with other Australian wildlife but also at an international level. For example, wildlife tourism issues relevant to the management of other large and potentially dangerous fauna such as bears (Decker, Jacobson and Brown 2006, Herrero et al. 2005, Lemelin 2005, Lemelin and Maher 2009) and tigers (Sekhar 2003) may prove similar to dingoes.

The topic of power was touched on tangentially in Chapter Five and, given the often competing interests in wildlife tourism, would be useful to examine in more theoretical depth. Understanding the power structures operating within a given wildlife tourism setting may help to better achieve effective collaboration and good governance over resources.

The argument was made for enhancing the understanding of, and respect for, wildlife amongst people. How is this best achieved? Wildlife managers and interpreters engaging in anthropomorphic discourse when communicating with people in the wildlife tourism setting might be one way. The effectiveness of this, however, needs

to be more thoroughly evaluated through a wider range of case studies and in interviews targeted toward assessing the outcomes of such an approach.

Literature in the field of environmental ethics discusses a wide range of possible ethical stances toward nature and wildlife (see, for example, Callicott 2006, Fennell 2006, Holden 2003, Macbeth 2005). Despite this breadth in the literature, the reality of how these stances are interpreted and put into practice, at least in the two case studies focussed on in this thesis, appear to be very narrow. Ethical dimensions appear missing from political decision-making in both cases. Management practice has been shown to focus on separating people and wildlife in an approach aimed at protecting people (on Fraser Island) and wildlife (on Penguin Island). On Fraser Island in particular management is anthropomorphic, placing the rights of people above those of the wildlife. Further research is needed to determine why this particular ethical stance remains dominant and what the adoption of alternative stances might mean for wildlife tourism.

It may be argued that all value is subjectively conferred (Callicott 1986, Elliot 1992). As shown throughout, the same species may be valued differently by different groups of people based on the perceived different purposes it serves (a utilitarian value). But, even intrinsic value (where a species is valued for its own sake) is not an objective classification. Thus, it could also be argued that attaching any sort of value to an entity is anthropocentric (Fennell 2006:178). Perhaps we can never truly escape an anthropocentric approach, much like anthropologists strive for cultural relativism but can never completely discard their own cultural baggage. At best then, we can at least be critical of anthropocentrism and recognise its existence and pervasiveness in wildlife management.



If an intrinsic value of wildlife, as both species and individuals, was widely recognised, then sufficient justification must be offered for putting it at risk (Callicott 2006:115). It is easier to do this with species as a whole than for individuals, which may help to explain why “conservationists ... are not professionally concerned with the welfare of individuals, but with the preservation of species” (Callicott 2006:114). In many cases management action aimed at the conservation of a species involves killing individuals of that species for the supposed benefit of the whole. Dingoes on Fraser Island are an example, as are elephants in South Africa (Lee and Graham 2006, Mundy 2006). This action is undertaken with the justification that killing individuals still involves attributing value (either intrinsic or utilitarian) to the species.

It is my assertion that managers should promote the intrinsic value of wildlife in all wildlife tourism settings, not as the only value, but as one of many, in recognition of the diversity of worldviews held by stakeholders in each wildlife tourism community. Once intrinsically valued, wildlife are then seen as sentient beings with their own rights to the natural spaces in which they exist.

Underlying definitions of environmental ethics or ecoethics (the focus on a more holistic approach to morality and nature) is the individual’s responsibility for doing ones part to ensure maintenance and sustainability of the earth’s resources (Fennell 2006:192). Thus, the approach I have been advocating may fit well within this field of enquiry. Environmental ethics has been mentioned throughout this thesis but has not been a major focus of the analysis. It could be argued that my recommendations lean toward a more ecocentric, as opposed to an egocentric or homocentric (see

Fennell 2006:193-195), approach to environmental ethics. This could be explored further in research into wildlife tourism.

## **11.6 Conclusion**

Nature conservation movements that emerged in various parts of the world during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were partly a reaction against the mercantilist exploitation of nature being carried out by both the European powers and the settler societies they had initiated. At the same time, they also reflected some of the European ‘enlightenment values’ that constructed nature as a resource for human use and enjoyment. Furthermore, the global conservationist agendas that emerged so strongly during the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were both anti-imperial in their defence of local diversity and, at the same time, imperial in their advocacy of certain Western ideas and assumptions. Hence, the nature conservation movement, in its various manifestations, has reflected the complexity of the overlapping agendas of colonialism and decolonisation. The history and future of nature conservation are both bound up with this complex legacy of European colonialism (Adams and Mulligan 2003b:292).

There are, of course, no universally appropriate conservation models or strategies (Adams and Mulligan 2003a:12), and it was not an aim of this thesis to devise one. Instead, this thesis explored the relationship between wildlife tourism and human communities, and the discussion of conservation was an essential part of this. Globally, we find wildlife tourism being marketed and utilised as a way of integrating conservation and development. There is no shortage of literature that proposes this integration as a win-win situation for sustaining wildlife (conservation) while generating income to assist human communities (development). It does not always work like this in practice, however.

Conservation literature tends to ignore the fundamental question of “how a resource is defined by different resource users and owners” (Langton 2003:90). There is an

underlying cultural assumption in all conservation thinking so that the resource in question tends to be “defined simply as a physical commodity without regard to its human values and significance” (Langton 2003:90). Yet such values and significance exist and, I would argue, have a dominant role to play in effective conservation whether they are openly acknowledged or not.

In an attempt, almost forty years ago, to bring ecology and religion together, Dubois (1969:129) argued for the centrality of values to conservation, going so far as to say that “Conservation is based on human values systems.” He further contended that conservation’s “deepest significance is the human situation and human heart. ... Above and beyond the economic ... reasons for conservation, there are aesthetic and moral ones which are even more compelling” (Dubois 1969:129). Is Dubois wrong, or are these values simply ignored in much of the current conservation literature and practice? Is it that these values exist, but hold less weight or are not acknowledged because there is less empirical evidence for them, and therefore we rely on economic reasons (values described by Kellert (1996) as ‘utilitarian’, for example) to support conservation?

Linking values to the case studies, do we strive to conserve the penguins on Penguin Island because we can make money from them? If not, then why do we do it? Is it out of some sense of moral justification because human interaction with them degraded the environment in which they were living? Or does it originate from a sense of innate connection with them (as Wilson’s biophilia hypothesis (1984) would have us believe)? It may be a combination of the latter two, but we use the first reason as justification because it is seen as being the most acceptable to the majority in a capitalist society.

Current management of much wildlife tourism can still be seen as a continuation of the colonial era because it contains the same basic assumptions about wildlife. This includes wildlife being perceived by the colonisers as a resource to be subdued and utilised, and the necessary separation of people and wildlife in order to control wildlife and protect people.

This thesis has shown that wildlife tourism offers a potential, because of the values of its human participants (the tourists) toward nature, to challenge the necessity of separating people and wildlife. Separating people and wildlife has been the dominant, eurocentric, ideology in management and is encapsulated in Christian religious beliefs; thus, it is difficult to change. It supports an ideology of anthropocentric dominance that protects people above anything else. Consequently, managers in wildlife tourism settings fear litigation if people are harmed, and wildlife can be killed.

I have argued throughout that the construction of physical and conceptual barriers between people and wildlife is not always warranted, and the human/nature spaces (Figure 10.2) do not need to be so definitively drawn. There is overlap and continuity between humans and nature (Plumwood 2003:56), just as there is humanity in animals and animality in humans (Fuentes 2006:130). It is essential to recognise these similarities, and anthropomorphic discourse can facilitate this, “in order to understand our own nature as ecological, nature-dependent beings and to relate more ethically and less arrogantly to the more-than-human world” (Plumwood 2003:56). Consequently, the argument has been made here that ecotourists should be encouraged to see themselves as part of, rather than separate from, nature and bear the consequences of that reconstruction.

The concept of ecotourism attempts not just to describe an activity, and provide a model of social and economic development, but also to set forth a philosophy that is guided by a particular ethical stance. Consequently, ecotourism “has proven a challenge to define” (Simon 1996:192). However, this does not mean we should shy away from it.

Despite criticisms of ecotourism, it remains one of the best opportunities for successful and sustainable tourism and, I believe, should be embraced if it truly offers responsible tourism in wildlife tourism settings. Consequently, I agree with Russell (2007) that we should not throw the baby (though it is perhaps more accurately now a troublesome teenager) of ecotourism out with the bathwater. The bathwater certainly needs changing, but the ideology behind ecotourism that sets it apart from other, less responsible and less socially and environmentally conscious, forms of tourism is something that the tourism industry badly needs. Fennell’s (2006:197) argument for an ethical foundation in ecotourism based on a framework of reverence toward, rather than continued abuse of, natural resources offers a potential way forward.

In light of the frequent misuses of the ecotourism label, many authors have called for a replacement term. However, regardless of what we call it, what is needed is a form of “responsible” (Russell and Wallace 2004:2) or “just” (Hultsman 1995) tourism. Hultsman’s (1995) model argues the need for ethical consideration in tourism practice but Holden (2003) takes this further to say that a new environmental ethic, one that is not anthropocentric, is needed. This need exists for all tourism, but is especially crucial in wildlife tourism contexts where there is much to lose for both people and wildlife from irresponsible and unjust tourism. Transferring

responsibility from managers of the tourism resource to the users of it (the tourists) offers one way of achieving a more 'responsible' form of tourism and thus sustainability. This has the dual benefit of empowering this stakeholder group in the wildlife tourism community while subsequently relieving some of the responsibility of managers who are often already over burdened with other issues in the wildlife tourism setting.

The approach may not, of course, be applicable in all settings. The fact that different studies in different areas frequently show different outcomes demonstrates the need for a situated engagement (Suchet 1999) that fully evaluates each context before implementing the type of situated freedom (Patterson *et al.* 1998) I have advocated.

Wildlife tourism, as with any other form of tourism, is encouraged to fit notions of perceived sustainability. As has been shown, some of the management decisions concerning the Fraser Island dingo population would seem to be in conflict with this notion, though to date a mutually beneficial balance between conservation and tourism appears to be occurring on Penguin Island.

For wildlife tourism to be sustainable it is not acceptable to have wildlife a risk to human life, nor is it acceptable to eradicate the fauna visitors expect to see. While negative interactions are the focus of wildlife management on Fraser Island, little attention is paid to positive interactions, which are desired by wildlife tourists.

It is not acceptable for wildlife to kill people, nor is it acceptable for people to kill wildlife if we attempt to uphold an ethical notion of the sanctity of all life. Boundaries may be perceived as needed to prevent negative interactions that lead to the disturbance of wildlife habitat and injury to wildlife by humans, and to prevent

humans being injured or killed by wildlife and wildlife then killed for their transgression of the boundaries. However, people do kill wildlife, in ways that are socially and culturally sanctioned for food and for pleasure, for example, in an anthropocentric model of the order of the world that puts humans above all other species. A challenge to this, and what in part prevents the total destruction of all dingoes or penguins, is the different values humans place on species and the notion of conservation. The feelings that we have toward these things are dictated by our different values (Fennell 2006:176). Values determine that some species, particularly those deemed to be rare or endangered, are worthy of conserving. The challenge then is to be critical of where we situate the boundaries, and to acknowledge how and why we construct them to allow for a more equal relationship between people and wildlife. My argument has been for a construction that puts people back in nature, and not in an isolated and separate realm that is above it, in a model that promotes coexistence between people and wildlife in wildlife tourism settings.

“History suggest that tourists and the environment are not always very compatible” (Edgell 2006:43). Thus, a challenge exists in trying to make them more so. The ideas posed in this thesis offer just one possible approach, which may work in some wildlife tourism settings, of making it happen. If, instead of focussing on separation as a way of minimising damage to both people and wildlife, we focus on coexistence and encouraging human stakeholders, especially ecotourists, to take responsibility for their own actions in nature-based settings, then we may find a way to balance the needs of both people and wildlife.

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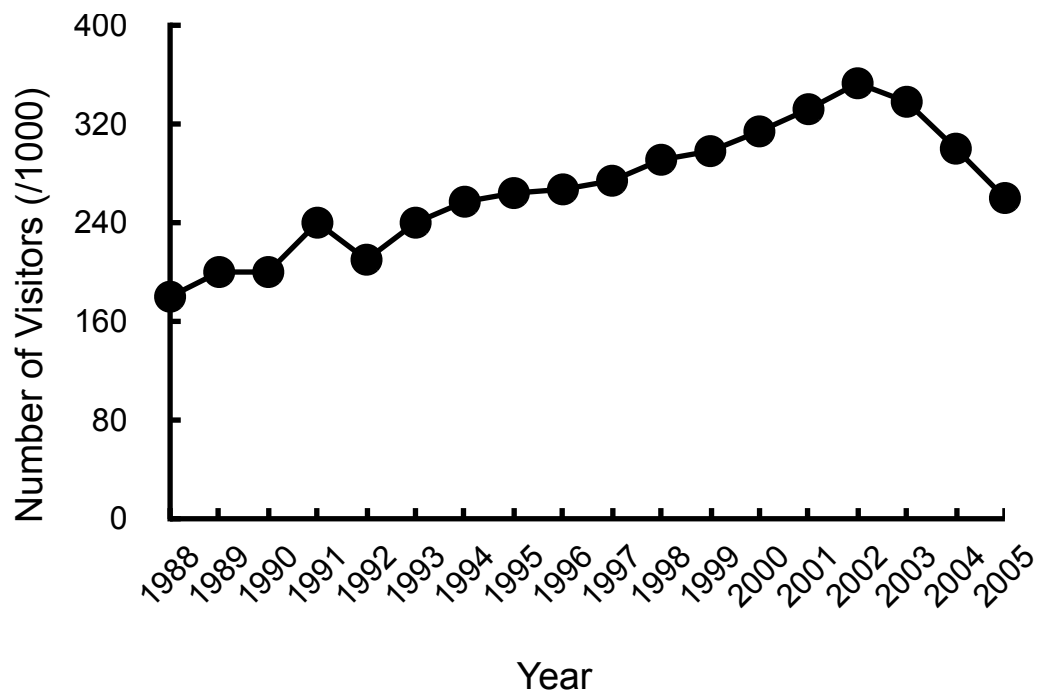
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## APPENDIX ONE:

### Visitor Numbers on Fraser Island (1988-2005)

A plot of visitor numbers to Fraser Island made with data from QPWS Sources



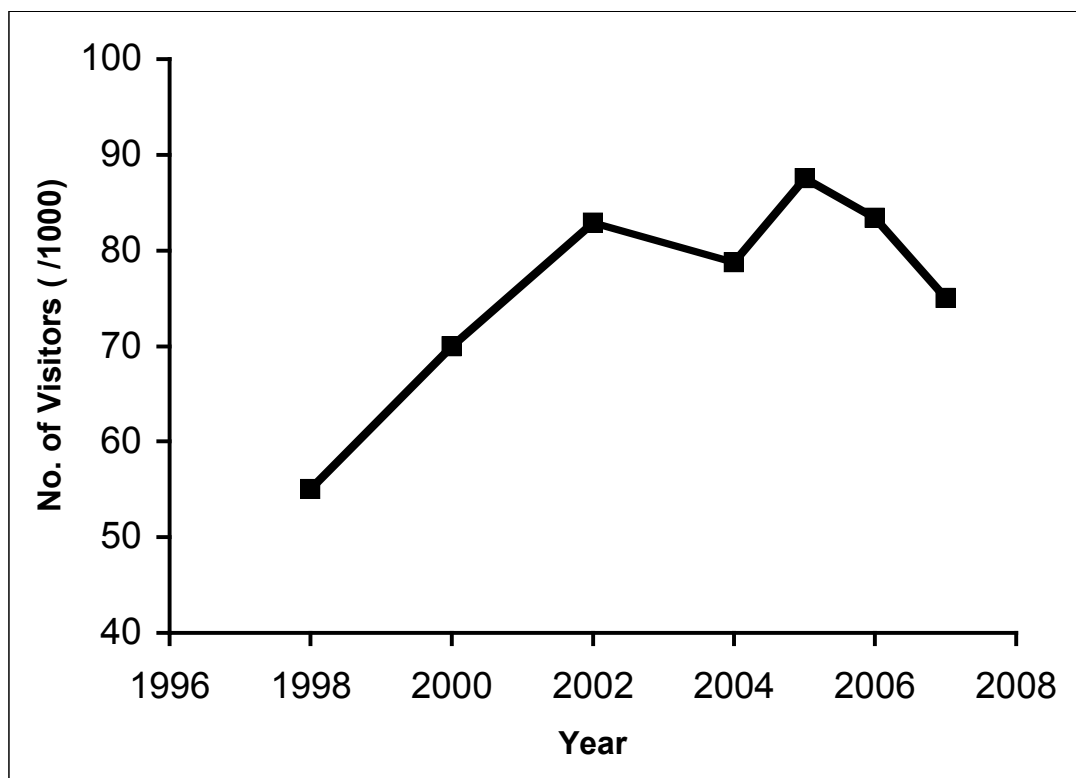




## APPENDIX TWO:

### Visitor Numbers on Penguin Island (1998-2007)

A plot of visitor numbers to Penguin Island made with data from the DEC Vistat database.





# APPENDIX THREE:

## Wild Dogs of Fraser Island

A poster produced by QPWS and displayed at Central Station: a popular destination on Fraser Island for campers and daytrippers.

### Wild dogs of Fraser Island

Fraser's dingoes are important. They're a purer breed than most mainland dingoes. Seeing wild dingoes in their natural habitat is a privilege so please ensure your safety and their survival by being *Dingo-Smart!*

#### Living with dingoes — you're in their territory

Dingoes' natural behaviour changes throughout the year. They are more aggressive in Autumn and Summer.

**Autumn (March – May)**  
**Mating, a time of dominance**  
 Adults fiercely protect their territory and will snarl and nip humans.

**Winter (June – August)**  
**Protecting and feeding newborn pups**  
 Mothers may be aggressive.

**Spring (September – November)**  
**Learning from their mothers.**  
 If food from humans is available, mothers may not teach pups natural hunting skills.

**Summer (December – February)**  
**Testing their strength.**  
 Puppy play can be aggressive, especially towards children.



#### Feeding dingoes is dangerous — for you and for them

If you feed dingoes or leave food unsecured in your camp they learn to harass people and ransack camps for food. Dingoes which become a threat to people must be humanely destroyed.

A dingo's natural diet is abundant and varied — from bandicoots and bush rats (above), to crabs and midyim berries (left). Though naturally lean like greyhounds, most of Fraser's dingoes are healthy.



but people's food is easier prey. Many dingoes have learnt that campgrounds are a source of food. They'll take anything they can get — food, rubbish, fish, bait, even your belongings.



A dingo-raided camp; belongings were not secured.

#### Be Dingo-Smart!

For your safety:

- NEVER feed dingoes.
- ALWAYS stay close to your children — walk in groups.
- Don't encourage, approach or excite dingoes.
- If approached, face the dingo and calmly back away.
- Store all food, bait and rubbish securely. Details in your *Be Dingo-Smart!* brochure.



#### Please be kind to me by being Dingo-Smart!

If you feed me or leave food available I may become aggressive to people and be killed.

Please don't do this to me!

FEEDING DINGOES IS AN OFFENCE.  
 Penalties apply.

